

Labour Monthly

EDITED BY R. PALME DUTT

V. I. LENIN

Revolutionary Phrasemongering

R. PAGE ARNOT

Defence of the British People

CLEMENS DUTT

The Class Struggle in France

JANUARY

1939

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LABOUR MONTHLY

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A New Year Message to Labour Monthly Readers

With this New Year we all know that we are entering the most critical year since the war.

In this situation we believe that the work which the LABOUR MONTHLY sets itself to accomplish in bringing the searchlight of Marxism to bear on all the new problems as they arise is more than ever needed.

We believe that the recognition of the value of this work is shown in the present year's record of the highest circulation yet reached in any year of the seventeen years of our journal's existence.

Under all the searching tests of the past year the LABOUR MONTHLY can claim to have come through with flying colours. Especially in relation to the Munich crisis the issues of September, October and November can bear examination in the light of later knowledge. The best testimony of this is the unparalleled high demand for the November issue, which turned the Chamberlain policy inside out and gave clear guidance on the many questions puzzling people in the most complete political analysis of these events appearing in any English journal.

And now we wish to put a proposal before our readers in the New Year.

Will it not be worth while in the coming year, not only to read and study the LABOUR MONTHLY, but to help actively to extend its work ?

The LABOUR MONTHLY depends for its existence on your support. We have no other source of funds or financial support of any organisation. We are proud to state that the LABOUR MONTHLY is already five-sixths self-supporting, that five-sixths of all the costs of production and distribution are covered by income from sales and advertisements. Extension of circulation, which the activity of our readers can win, will in time cover that remaining sixth. In the meantime there is the deficit of that remaining sixth to be met, amounting to about £23 a month.

How is that deficit met ? By the support of readers. A small band of faithful readers give us regular guarantees and donations, which make possible the appearance of a journal whose value we are confident you recognise. Are you doing your share ? We want that tiny band to be enormously increased in the coming year. The Guarantee Fund has fallen below the necessary minimum level. The Development Fund urgently needs help.

A reader of Leicester, who calls himself "Lester Lad," contributes regularly to our Development Fund. He writes : "I am an old age pensioner but my desire is to donate 10s. 6d. every half year to our political policy through your fund." "Lester Lad" is still an active

member of his Co-operative Political Party. A Cambridge University Student has sent us sums of money to the same fund with the regularity of clockwork and the total of his donations can truly be described as a "grand" total. On the other hand, our Guarantee Fund, together with the working class movement, has suffered loss through the recent death of a generous contributor. His son, who sends a memorial donation which is listed in our Development Fund acknowledgments in this number under "A.G.M. In memory of J.A.M.", sends us this brief biographical note on this sterling old socialist campaigner :—

On November 28th, 1938, the death took place of James Arthur Morton, who under the pseudonym of "Anon., Prescott," was for several years a loyal and generous supporter of the LABOUR MONTHLY. As a young man he worked actively in the Independent Labour Party and continued his financial support for many years after ceasing active membership. In recent years the sterile sectarianism of the I.L.P. led him to sever all connection with it. Although he joined no other political party he contributed generously and regularly to the Communist Party, the LABOUR MONTHLY and the International Brigade funds, and assisted the working class movement in many other ways. He continued to work energetically for collective security in the League of Nations Union, and at the time of his death was President of his local branch.

The death of "Anon., Prescott" has created a gap in the defences of the LABOUR MONTHLY which must be filled. The Fund which immediately suffers is the Guarantee Fund. The Guarantee Fund is at present three-fifths of the necessary level of £23 a month. This means danger of new debt. We hope readers will quickly rally to bring it up to the necessary level.

Last New Year we asked our readers to make a special effort to wipe out our debt in the coming year. This has now been done by the response of our readers during the past year. This year we ask them to bring our Guarantee Fund up to a minimum of £23 a month, and to help forward the Development Fund and circulation. Let every one give some donation ; let all who can take on a regular guarantee.

With all good wishes to our readers for decisive political advance in the coming year.

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[Acknowledgments to Development Fund are printed on page 25.]

NOTES OF THE MONTH

Outlook for 1939—The Great Divide of 1938—The World after Munich—Versailles Reversed—After Twenty Years—"The Parties of War and Revenge"—The Second Imperialist War—Franco-German Pact—A Pact for War—French General Strike—Schacht and Chamberlain—Hitler's Next Blow—Conflicting Forces in Eastern Europe—Conservative Divisions—Cabinet Disharmony—Rising Tide Against Chamberlain—A Majority if United—The Central Issue of British Politics—Problem of Dissident Conservatives and Labour—Dominant Immediate Aim—Is a Common Programme Possible?—The Way to Change the World in 1939

AT the opening of 1939 we are faced with a situation and prospect of extreme seriousness. At the beginning of the past year we wrote in last January's Notes that "we are approaching the Great Divide of the international situation." This expectation has been fulfilled by the events of the past year. Munich represents the Great Divide of the modern international situation, as decisive in its fashion as 1914. The seven-year period of the preliminary advance of the war crisis and of the fascist challenge since 1931 has now reached completion. With Munich the entire post-war order which came out of the last war is shattered; the peace system, such as it was, is destroyed; the leadership of Britain and France in world affairs is ended for the time being; the immediate initiative has passed to the defeated States, to fascism, which no longer makes any concealment of its aims of world conquest. Fascism's war for the redivision of the world is now in the open. A stage has been reached in which it is possible for the Manifesto of the Communist International, issued on the occasion of the twenty-first anniversary of the Soviet Union, to declare that "the second imperialist war has in fact already begun." This perspective governs the outlook

for 1939. The prospects thus opened make very sharp the political conclusions of what now requires to be done, and necessitate a fresh approach, in the most realist and serious spirit, to the forces of the situation that can be mustered against the major European offensive of fascism which we must now expect.

IT is only necessary to contrast the situation at the opening of 1938 with its close to see the transformation that has taken place. At the beginning of 1938 Austria was still a sovereign State. Czechoslovakia was still an independent sovereign State and fortress of democracy. The peace system of Europe, based on the links of France, Czechoslovakia and the Soviet Union, through their pacts within the League, together with the Little Entente and the precarious participation of Britain, still maintained peace and held aggression in check in the main body of Europe, although already sacrificing Spain. Nazi Germany had not yet expanded beyond its frontiers. Even the Italian claim to the conquest of Abyssinia was not yet recognised. The post-war order, though heavily undermined, was not yet broken. The right of aggression had not yet been officially recognised ; and the forces capable of checking it were still present and active, as shown on May 21 even in the first half of 1938. Changkufeng in August, 1938, still further reinforced the peace front and dealt a blow to the war forces.

ALL this has now been changed, and the midwife of the transformation has been Britain. *Britain destroyed the dykes of peace at Munich. That is the history of 1938 in a nutshell.* Two leading States of Europe have been devoured, and the only question now asked is which State will be devoured next. No State or people feels safe before the raging flood let loose. The last lap of the arms race strains every country to breaking point, and only makes more overwhelming the deadly character of the future conflict. Chamberlain, Hitler and Mussolini have carried through their glorious offensive to destroy collective security (amid the applause of the "pure pacifists" and the "pure socialists") and to

re-establish the law of the jungle as the only recognised law of relations between States. The British reactionary admirers of Hitler may now rejoice to look on the present picture of the world, remoulded after the image of their own ideals—the ideals of the tiger and the beast of prey.

THE men who made Versailles have destroyed Versailles. British and French reaction has been engaged in throwing away the fruits of a victory, won twenty years ago with limitless blood and treasure, and undermining the basis of power and world influence of their own States. This is the peculiar and apparently paradoxical character of the present world situation. Never in so short a time has there been so complete a reversal of the rôles of victors and vanquished, not through the strength of the vanquished, but through the self-destruction of the victors. “It is as if, not they, but we were the victors of the war,” as Goebbels declared in a speech last year: “there was a time when the world spoke of the demands it would make on us; to-day we speak only of the demands which we make on the world.” An American commentator remarks that Chamberlain at Munich succeeded in performing the political miracle of at one stroke finally losing the last war and also the next.

MANY of the two hundred hard-faced Members of Parliament, including the saintly Lord Halifax, who sent the notorious telegram to Lloyd George to enforce the most merciless and barbarous terms against democratic and peace-loving Germany, as a supposed menace to the world, are now engaged in destroying their own handiwork and throwing down all barriers before the path of fascist and militarist Germany, which is a real menace to the world. It was the *Times* of May 12, 1939, which described the Versailles Treaty as “almost unique among the Treaties of the world in the careful consideration that its framers have given to the principles of a just settlement.” To-day the Versailles Treaty is torn up amid the plaudits of the *Times*, which denounces its injustices and compares it to its disadvantage with previous peace settlements. The *Times* is here

only faithful to its invariable ignoble rôle of bullying the weak and cringing to the strong, of kicking the beaten enemy and fawning on the tyrant: the rôle of the journal which, in Hazlitt's famous words, "takes up no falling cause, fights no uphill battle, advocates no great principle, holds out a helping hand to no obscure or oppressed individual, but is 'ever strong upon the stronger side.'" In truth there is no contradiction. The reactionary rulers of Britain and France were harsh to democratic and peace-loving Germany precisely because it was democratic and veering to socialism. They throw down all barriers and hand over the keys of power to fascist and militarist Germany precisely because it is fascist and reactionary. The deeper principle of reaction unites the seeming contradictions of twenty years ago and to-day.

THE post-war order was bound to collapse. Versailles contained from the outset the seeds of its own destruction, as Marxism and the Left foretold at the time. The hegemony of France in Europe was artificial, and did not correspond to the real relations of strength, but had to be buttressed from the outset by the complicated system of alliances. In terms of the real bases of imperialist power, in terms of industrial and financial power, France and the organisation of French capitalism falls below the level of Britain and Germany. This is illustrated to-day when France is straining itself to budget £220 million for its arms programme for 1939, and for this purpose is having to allocate two-thirds of its entire budget; yet this sum is little more than half what Britain is spending on arms, with a smaller proportion of its total budget, and from one-third to one-fourth of what Germany is spending. The resurgence of Germany was inevitable, even within the conditions of imperialism. But it made all the difference whether this resurgence should take place through the advance of the peoples revising the conditions of Versailles and moving forward to a new order, or whether it should take place through the revival of "the parties of bellicose imperialism, the parties of war and revenge" (in the terms of Stalin's speech in January, 1934).

THAT it took the latter form was the responsibility of British and French reaction through their policy in the post-war years. British and French reaction through their criminal and insane post-war policy bear the most direct responsibility for the rise of Hitler. Once the issue had been so decided, once the menace of an infuriated and revenge-seeking fascist-militarist Germany overhung Europe, it became essential for the peoples to combine to hold in check this menace. But at this moment the parties of reaction in Britain and France decided to abandon all their policy, to destroy their alliances, to destroy the League, to remove every barrier in the path of Germany. They decided to repent of all their crimes against Germany at the moment when Germany was no longer the victim of aggression, but the aggressor. France, which had so long and at such fabulous cost maintained its system of alliances in Europe, for the purposes of crime and injustice, threw over the whole system when for the first time they could have served their professed object of maintaining peace, betrayed its former allies to the mercies of the conqueror, and retired into its shell, as the humble vassal of Hitler (the Bonnet-Ribbentrop Pact). Chamberlain, the haughty dictator to democratic Germany in the post-war Ministries, became the humble pilgrim to Hitler and Mussolini at Berchtesgaden, Godesberg, Munich and Rome to receive their Diktats. In this way the parties of reaction in Britain and Germany completed their betrayal of the interests of their peoples. It was the same parties of reaction which brought Hitler to power and then opened to him the path of war. The policy of Chamberlain is only the sequel and climax of the whole policy of British reaction since the war.

THE Franco-German Pact and Chamberlain's visit to Rome are the logical next step and carrying forward of Munich. The Franco-German Pact registers the submission of France to the will of Hitler. Its anti-French character as a new step, not in the reconciliation of peoples, but in the conspiracy of reaction against the peoples, was symbolised in the conditions of its signature, which was carried out,

not like a public reconciliation of the two nations amid public rejoicing, but like a crime of guilty conspirators, with the German envoy smuggled through silent streets lined with troops. Its character of vassaldom to Hitler, and of betrayal of France's democratic egalitarian traditions, was symbolised in the Government's reception banquet to the German envoy, when the two Jewish Government Ministers, Mandel and Zay, were excluded from the Government's own reception. Thus the writ of Hitler is accepted by the Daladier Government as ruling France even before any corresponding régime has been established. In place of the majority elected by the people, Daladier governs on the basis of the support of the Right, of Doriot, La Roque and the fascists. France under Daladier slides downwards into the melancholy position of Czechoslovakia under Chvalkovsky. But the French people have not yet spoken their last word.

THE practical significance of the Franco-German Pact lies, not in the worthless guarantee of France's frontiers (corresponding to Hitler's guarantee of the frontiers of Czechoslovakia in March, 1938, and illuminated by the simultaneous claim through the press of the other partner of the Axis, through the mouth of Signor Gayda, that "Germany is not only on the frontiers of Italy, but also on those of France, near territory which is under French sovereignty but is populated by three-and-a-half million Germans and is rich in iron and potash"), but in the isolation of France from its allies in Europe and in the tacit repudiation of its obligations to Poland and Rumania and under the Franco-Soviet Pact. In the words of De Kerillis, the single French Conservative leader who fought Munich :

I am convinced that Ribbentrop's game consists in "neutralising" France with a view to a great offensive in Eastern Europe next spring. He hopes to neutralise us by sending us to sleep with the chloroform of friendly vows of peaceful protestations.

Similarly the Catholic journal *Aube*, writes :

There is every reason to believe that our frontier is being recognised in order that our frontiers in Europe may be destroyed.

In a subsequent article De Kerillis writes in the *Epoque* :

Beginning next spring, Germany is going to launch an attack upon the Ukraine, a district larger and just as populous and rich as ours. Herr von Ribbentrop wished to obtain, not the written promise, not even the verbal promise, but merely the tacit consent of M. Georges Bonnet to this programme. And M. Bonnet gave it to him.

In the same way the Polish journal *Goniec*, writes :

Germany aims at getting France not to pay attention in future to Eastern Europe. Germany is particularly anxious to drive out France from Eastern Europe, and to induce her to cease to be interested in the problems of the Danube Basin in the Balkan States, and possibly also in the problems of Poland and Russia.

Finally, the Nazi journal, the Westphalian *Landeszeitung*, writes bluntly :

The Franco-German Pact is directed against the Franco-Soviet Pact.

The "annihilation of France" is not abandoned from the programme of *Mein Kampf* : on the contrary, the Franco-German Pact represents a big step forward to the aim of the subjection of France, without a war, as in the case of Czechoslovakia.

FOR this reason the French General Strike of November 30, led by the Confederation of Labour against the economic offensive of the reactionary decree-laws, was an expression of the struggle of the entire French people, not only for their vital immediate interests and the social gains of the People's Front, but for their liberties and existence. This, and not the bought Paris press, was the voice of the French people (the statement of De Kerillis should never be forgotten that between May and November, 1938, the Nazi agency spent two million pounds on the French press, publicists and politicians to carry through the complete reversal of policy on Czechoslovakia). Against this pacific demonstration of the French people Daladier was ready and eager to turn the tanks and the guns which he was so unwilling to use against Hitler. The fact that in the face of the unexampled military repression over two million workers came out (later information indicates that the real figure was considerably higher,

and probably nearer three millions) is a measure of the true feelings of the French people. Not until Daladier had carried through this violent suppression did he feel safe to invite Ribbentrop on December 6 for the signature of his pact with Hitler. The real significance of that suppression as a glow against the French people in the interests of its enemies was shown already on the afternoon of November 30, when, as soon as the French governmental radio was proclaiming the defeat of the general strike, the bill began to come in, and Italian fascism staged its demonstration demanding Tunis, Corsica and Nice. These demands were no doubt staged at that moment as preparatory blackmail in order to force surrender over Spain, and thus establish the third front (really the fourth front, in view of Britain's rôle) for the surrounding of France. Within a fortnight followed Chamberlain's ostentatious denial of any obligation to assist France against Italy.

CHAMBERLAIN'S visit to Rome, following Schacht's visit to Montagu Norman in London, is the next link in the chain. Schacht's visit brings into the open the financial aid of the City to Germany, consistently pursued and developed to buttress the Hitler régime and its rearmament, despite the growing alarm of trading interests over the economic threat of the German exports offensive in the Near East. Chamberlain's visit to Rome is evidently directed in the first place to close co-operation with Italian fascism against the Spanish Republic, to assist the blockade, in the hope of repeating the betrayal of Czechoslovakia in relation to Spain. The alarm of the most informed diplomatic and strategic quarters in Britain, as well as in France, over this prospect, is acute, and is reflected in the growing strength and activity of the Conservative opposition. But the character of Chamberlain's answers in parliament indicate that he prepares once again, as over Munich, to present parliament on its reunion with an accomplished fact. This makes the situation one of great urgency.

HITLER'S offensive aims are open and unconcealed. Fascism has now reached the stage when it proclaims

directly in the daily utterances of its leaders its aims of the redivision of the world. In the words of Goebbels at Nuremberg on April 7: "Adolf Hitler takes care to rally the forces of this country at a time when we believe the moment has come to redivide the world." Having secured the isolation and subjection of France under Daladier, the subordination of Italy, whose independent aims in Central and South Eastern Europe also received their blow at Munich, and the limitless co-operation of Britain under Chamberlain, Nazi Germany prepares its offensive in Eastern Europe. The labours of those who customarily endeavour to cast horoscopes for the coming year are nowadays lightened; they have only to consult *Mein Kampf* for the next step in the time-table, with the reasonable expectation that, so long as Chamberlain remains in power, their prophecies will prove inspired. In accordance with the time-table the Ukraine now comes to the forefront in Nazi propaganda, political and military preparations and the world press.

THE base of the Nazi offensive in the Ukraine is already established in Eastern Czechoslovakia, with the detachment of Ruthenia, re-named "Carpatho-Russia," under a Government directed from Berlin, and with a Nazi Military Attaché specially appointed to it. The next step is directed to Polish Ukraine; the Autonomy Bill, drawn up under Nazi inspiration and presented to the Polish Diet, claims nine millions. At the same time the slogan is launched through the Czech press, and through the secondary organs of the Nazi press, such as the youth organ *Wille und Macht*, for the establishment of the "Greater Ukrainian State of forty-five million inhabitants"—that is, the open call to an attempt of aggression against the Soviet Union. This fire-eating language undoubtedly warms the shrivelled hearts of the "peace-loving" Chamberlain and Montagu Norman. Nevertheless, the Nazi military experts are likely to calculate with very sober care the preliminary steps before they dare approach such a goal, especially in view of the experience of Japan at Changkufeng, which taught the Triple Pact Powers of fascism once and for all that it is not possible to treat the Soviet

Union in the same cavalier fashion as Britain and France. The first step involves the conflict with Poland to establish the broader Ukrainian base. This conflict threatens for next spring. As this conflict looms in view, the Polish ruling class begins to endeavour to correct its former policy and to feel its way to the possibility of closer co-operation with the Soviet Union. A similar tendency, in conflict with the pro-Nazi forces, is visible in Rumania, with the sharp action against the Iron Guard terrorists, and also in Finland. Meanwhile from the side of the Soviet Union has come the important declaration through the *Izvestia* :

All countries desiring to strengthen their security in Europe after Munich can look to the Soviet Union for support.

BUT the eastward expansion of Nazi Germany, consequent on the capitulation of the Western democratic Powers at Munich, the collapse of France and its system of alliances, and the direct encouragement from the reckless reactionary and war-promoting policy of the Chamberlain Government, raises the prospect of that expansion pressing forward more and more actively towards the Near East, towards the bases of British imperialist interests, where the strategic defences are far less strong than in the case of the Soviet Union. Chamberlain's hope is obviously still to be able to bribe Germany into moving in the alternative direction ; but the price of the bribing grows continuously higher, and each successive weakening of Britain, in pursuance of Chamberlain's policy, raises the price and increase the insolence and self-confidence of Nazi Germany. As this prospect looms closer, alarm spreads in the British ruling class, reflected in the rapid growth of the Conservative opposition and the disintegration and demoralisation in the Government camp.

THIS alarm begins to find expression even in the utterances of Ministers. The bankruptcy of " appeasement " can no longer be concealed. New types of expression begin to show through, not from Chamberlain, but from his colleagues. Examples of this type of post-Munich disillusionment even from within the heart of the Cabinet are important

to note :

There is a deep and growing feeling that there is nothing we can do that can satisfy Germany. (Earl De La Warr, President of the Board of Education, December 4.)

Unless Germany is prepared to put an end to this type of competition . . . we shall tell her, "We will fight you and beat you at your own game." (R. S. Hudson, Secretary of the Department of Overseas Trade, November 30.)

I had hoped that the Conference at Munich marked the opening of a new chapter of human history. I am obliged to confess that my hope has been rudely shaken by the events in Germany of the past week. (Lord Zetland, Secretary of State for India, November 18.)

The Prime Minister's effort has undoubtedly met with a sad check. (Sir Thomas Inskip, Minister for the Co-ordination of Defence, November 16.)

Nevertheless, despite all this disillusionment and wringing of hands, these Ministers have no alternative policy to offer. Their fortunes are tied to Hitler's chariot. The alternative policy can only be carried through by the defeat of Chamberlain.

AT the height of the "Eden crisis" last February the Nazi organ, the *Völkische Beobachter*, was careful to note that the "Eden school," that is, the anti-Chamberlain policy, represented the majority of the British people.

Do not let us deceive ourselves. The Eden school has still the greatest following in England. If the efforts of Mr. Chamberlain should not succeed in their object by the methods he is employing, there would be a swing of the pendulum. If the efforts of Mr. Chamberlain and his new Foreign Minister fail in their object, it must be realised that the pendulum of British political opinion, which has now swung to the Right, may return once more to the Left. (*Völkische Beobachter*, February 27, 1938.)

This tendency of majority opinion was still more marked in the Dominions.

The comments of the Canadian newspapers are, on balance, strongly favourable to Mr. Eden and critical of Mr. Chamberlain. (*Times*, February 23, 1938.)

Public opinion in all the Dominions, including Canada, appears to have aligned itself definitely on the side of Eden. (*New York Nation*, March 5, 1938.)

All this was ten months ago before the great disillusionment of Munich.

BUT this process, which was visible last spring, has Breached a far higher stage since Munich. The first five by-elections since Munich showed the replacement of a previous Government majority by an anti-Government majority, a fall in the Government vote and an increase in the Opposition vote by one-fifth. The biggest and most dramatic change-over (replacement of a Government majority of 10,569 by an Opposition majority of 2,332) took place precisely where there was a united Opposition fight on the central issue of opposition to the Chamberlain policy. Where the fight was conducted on the old party basis of Labour, pursuing a sectional anti-unity policy, against the Government, the public response was far weaker, the percentage of polling much lower, and no sufficient change-over secured to hold out any prospect of a majority against the Government. There is every reason to expect that West Perth is likely to reinforce this lesson. At the same time there is a growing demoralisation in the ranks of the Government's supporters, extending far beyond those who have as yet nailed their flag to the mast of the open dissidents. Still more marked is the process among the enormous numbers of those without fixed party affiliation. The political conclusion is clear, and is indeed recognised by observers in every camp. There is at present already a majority in the country against the Chamberlain Government and its policy. There is not a majority for the Labour Party on its present basis. The possibility of defeating the Chamberlain Government, with all that that would mean for the future of the world, now exists. But that possibility can only be made real by the unity of all the opposition forces on the measure of agreed programme which can be secured.

THIS is now the central issue of British politics, and, through this, of world politics. The fascist press does not often speak the truth save by accident ; but the *Gazzetta del Popolo* let out a truth when it declared on December 13 :

At bottom the question of war or peace is a problem of British internal politics.

This truth, however, is used to point the exact opposite conclusion of the facts. The fascist journal declares: "If Mr. Chamberlain holds firm, it will be peace." The exact opposite is the case. The experience of seven years has shown that the British reactionary policy, now brought to a culmination by Chamberlain, means the steady extension of fascist war, until the second imperialist war now already spreads over the world. The steady stream of abuse poured out by Hitler and Mussolini against the opponents of Chamberlain, not only against Labour and Liberal representatives, but against Churchill, Eden and Duff-Cooper, shows who are to-day regarded by the war-makers as obstacles to their war plans. While the Chamberlain Government has endeavoured to set its official seal on Eden's visit to the United States, the triumphal reception accorded to Eden in the United States has been precisely because he has been regarded as the representative of the opposition to Chamberlain :

Mr. Eden has had an unusually good press during his visit here. . . . The statement is often being made that, since Mr. Eden opposes policies of the Chamberlain Government which are also opposed by the majority of Americans, he should be a welcome guest. (New York correspondent of the *Manchester Guardian*, December 15, 1938).

This growing crisis in the Government camp and within the Conservative Party raises the most important issues for the Labour movement. It raises both dangers and possibilities ; which way the development will go depends above all on the action of Labour.

IN a previous analysis we have had occasion to criticise, while recognising the progressive significance of their opposition to Chamberlain, the concrete programme and tendencies of the Dissident Conservatives in their utterances in the first weeks after Munich : first, in respect of foreign policy, that they tended to fall back on the exclusive alliance of Britain and France, to ignore the conception of the Peace bloc, the League of Nations or association with the Soviet

Union, and even, as in Churchill's broadcast to the United States, to attack the Soviet Union and Communism ; and second, that individuals from among them showed signs of manœuvring for reunion with Chamberlain on the basis of a reactionary home policy which could only assist the course to fascism. Since then signs of a change of note have become visible, which are important to take into account. The fight is sharpening. In this respect Churchill's speech at Chingford on December 9 is significant. In this speech he called for a foreign policy :

to gather together all the forces of resistance to the aggression of dictators and to make a common cause with other like-minded nations. So far from abandoning what was left of the League of Nations or whittling down its powers, we must proclaim our resolve to clothe it with even greater powers.

For this purpose he called for a " real National Government " to replace the Chamberlain Government :

A National Government should be formed—a real National Government, not an outworn sham, but a Government embracing all the forces in the country which make for its strength, its safety and its survival.

The platform from which this speech was delivered was that of the League of Nations Union, and gathered, alongside independent Conservatives, representatives of the Liberal, Labour and Communist Parties, including the Labour M.P., Arthur Henderson, and the local secretary of the Communist Party. We have no occasion to have any illusions as to the class rôle of these representatives of independent Conservatism. But in the present historical moment every force that can strengthen the fight against the disastrous policy of Chamberlain and the allies of fascism is of vital importance for the victory of the labour and democratic movement. To fail to recognise this, to hand back to Chamberlain the opposition within his own ranks instead of doing everything to deepen the gulf, would be political childishness, and not a service, but a disservice to the cause of Labour.

THERE are two main streams in the opposition to Chamberlain. There is the broad stream of the Labour and democratic movement, which opposes Chamberlain as the

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representative and champion of fascism and reaction. There is the stream of the growing section within the ruling class, together with a considerable body of the Government's former supporters who are alarmed at the consequences of the surrender of Empire interests and national interests to fascism. Between these two streams there are deep divergencies of outlook. But on the central issue of politics to-day, the defeat of the disastrous policy of the Chamberlain Government (whose success would mean the defeat of every other cause and policy for which we are concerned), there is at this moment a common aim, which transcends every other immediate aim, and offers the possibility for these two bodies of opinion to combine their strength in order to achieve that aim. It is here less a question of individual leaders and organisations than of the mass of opinion in the country, associated with the divers organisations, and also outside any organisation, which can be mobilised by a vigorous campaign of a united opposition to constitute a majority against Chamberlain, force a general election and thus ensure the early defeat of the Chamberlain Government before the disastrous consequences of his policy will have gone further.

CAN a common immediate programme be hammered out, Calike on foreign and domestic issues, capable of mobilising a united opposition, the feeling for which already exists in the country, for the defeat of the Chamberlain Government and the providing of an alternative Government? This is the key question of controversy in the present situation. We believe that such a programme can be realised, provided the will to co-operate exists. The propaganda of some extreme reactionary representatives of the Labour leading elements insists with special vehemence at the present moment, when this is seen as a hoped-for obstacle to an effective common front against Chamberlain, that "nothing but socialism" is of any use as an immediate programme. This is only the continuance and reproduction of the old familiar line and propaganda of MacDonald in the past, who always sought to cloud every issue and quell every revolt by counterposing "socialism" in the abstract to every issue of struggle and

throwing out mystical adjurations to be faithful to "our socialist ideals" as the unfailing alternative and pretext for opposing every immediate struggle. The fight for socialism is not a question of empty day-dream aspirations, but of class struggle ; and the class struggle requires the correct understanding of the alignment of forces at each given stage so as to be able to win every ally and take advantage of every break in the enemy's forces, and direct the main blow at each point against the main enemy for the advantage of the working class.

THE objection is often raised by those who oppose unity of the opposition forces that a united opposition and an alternative Government cannot be built up on the basis of foreign policy alone, and that on home issues no unity could be obtained. The antithesis is a false one. The fight against Chamberlain is a fight against a single policy of extreme reaction in every field, at home and abroad ; and the issues have become more and more inseparable. The same policy which stands for the alliance with fascism stands also as a necessary counterpart, for the destruction of democratic rights and for the attack on the social services. A programme against the Chamberlain Government is necessarily a programme, not only for a policy of peace, for the defence of the people against external fascist aggression, but equally for the defence of democratic liberties and the defence of the standards of living of the people. In their recent utterances many also of the dissident Conservatives have shown their recognition of the necessity of concessions in this sphere, if a wider movement is to be built up. But the Labour movement, as the numerically decisive element in any combination, will have the principal and decisive word in any social programme of a united Opposition. The character of the programme, and the composition of the alternative Government, will depend above all on the initiative, the activity and the leading rôle of Labour. On whether Labour succeeds in fulfilling this responsibility, and a united Opposition is realised in time in Britain, depends, more than on any other single factor, the outlook for 1939.

R. P. D.

Crusade for Defence of the British People

BY R. PAGE ARNOT

THERE IS A storm brewing in British politics. The government are uneasily aware of it. Chamberlain, Simon and the others are trying to stave it off in their wireless broadcasts and speeches. The fancied security into which some were deluded by the betrayal of Munich has given place in these last few months to an anxiety which coincides with the anxiety of the mass of the population at the growing economic crisis and the growing danger to democracy in Britain. The storm is brewing. Everything now depends on the ability of the opposition to gather up all forces and to direct the storm to the overthrow of Chamberlain.

In the world war now begun and involving one-quarter of mankind in Asia, Europe and Africa, the resistance to fascist aggression and the defeat of the warmongers depends first and foremost on the international working-class. It is the historic destiny of the international working-class to rally all the supporters of peace and democracy to save the whole of mankind from destructive war. Within Britain, the seat of the most reactionary government of British imperialism there has ever been, this historic duty falls on the British Labour Movement. Not only is the working-class of Britain a far greater proportion of the total population than elsewhere, not only has it traditions of united struggle reaching further back than any other, but also its energies, exercised powerfully and unitedly against the National Government, have an immediate effect throughout the whole world. Not at any time in this generation does so much hang upon the British working-class and its organisations.

At this moment everything depends on the ability of the British working-class to realise the part it has to play to be thus united to mobilise, as only the united working-class can do, the activities of every Trade Unionist, every Co-operator, every Labour Party member, and to rally behind it the forces of opposition in every section of the population. But unless the whole situation and its gigantic possibilities for effective action are seen clearly, unless there is an end to wavering and hesitation, these possibilities cannot be realised. Therefore now, as never before, the need is for a concerted effort of every individual and organisation to unite and mobilise the forces of the working-class.

The first point necessary in this clear understanding of the situation is to have an end to all confusion about the part that is being played

by the National Government. If, inside the Labour Movement, there are leaders who refuse, as in September, at the meetings in Blackpool, to take up the fight against Chamberlain in an open and thorough way it is a disaster to the cause of peace and the interests of the working-class and the whole people. In December Mr. Ernest Bevin can still say "The uncertainty which exists is leading the public to wonder whether the Government are determined to maintain liberty and to strive for a real peace or whether in their hearts they are willing, in order to preserve the great financial and capital interests, to make alliance with the Devil!"

So long as this willingness to give credit to Chamberlain exists amongst right-wing Labour leaders, so long as it is possible for I.L.P. Members of Parliament to give their cruder echo (McGovern's "Well done thou good and faithful servant" addressed to Chamberlain), so long, in a word, as aid and comfort is given to the National Government, there can be no effective struggle. So long as the miserable *Daily Herald* propaganda, representing Chamberlain as well-meaning but weak, benevolent but incompetent, continues, the danger cannot be fully realised or effectively fought against. It is necessary for everyone to understand that Chamberlain represents the forces of reaction all the time, is himself a foul reactionary, enemy of everything progressive and democratic in Britain. The 15th Congress of the Communist Party in September put it clearly:

The Chamberlain Government has pursued this scandalous policy of betrayal because it is the representative of those reactionary circles in Great Britain who in their own way are working for a Government similar to those of Germany and Italy, in order to have a free hand ruthlessly to pursue their class interests. They are, at the outset of the economic crisis, demanding a cut in the social services and the reduction of the standard of life of the British people.

The importance of this statement, as indeed of the whole line of policy developed and put forward at the 15th Congress of the Communist Party, is that it cuts through the pretence of the separation between foreign policy and home policy. Those who, like some of the Peace Pledge Union, would make a separation between the two and while grumbling about home affairs are ready to acclaim the warmonger Chamberlain as a friend of peace presently confute themselves and find that their support of Chamberlain at Munich has aided the National Government in its drive for rearmament, industrial conscription and attack on the conditions of the people.

Secondly, there is confusion on the question of the attitude of dissident Tories such as Churchill, Eden, etc. A riot of speculation as to their possible policies is hiding the fact of greatest importance, namely that there is a cleavage in the ranks of the ruling-class, represented partly by the dissident Tories. This clear opening of the cleavage in the Tory Party is one of the most outstanding political events of 1938. It has led to a whole series of resignations from the

Cabinet. It harasses the Prime Minister (as seen by complaints about Tory opposition broadcasts "fouling one's own nest"). It lessens the forces of the main enemy, and enables the blow against them to be delivered more effectively.

Not only is there within the ruling-class this cleavage, neglect of which would be the height of political folly, but within other classes as well outside the ranks of the Labour Movement there is growing dissatisfaction with the whole policy of the Government. If it was mainly on foreign affairs that the agricultural population of the Bridgwater constituency rejected the National Government candidate, it was linked up with a widespread dissatisfaction about the economic position of agriculture. This was made still more clear in December when the Minister for Agriculture, Morrison, was howled down by the farmers assembled at his meeting at Lincoln. The farmers had already been forewarned of Neville Chamberlain's hostility to progress in agriculture by his speech at Kettering earlier in the year. The working-out of the agricultural policy of the National Government has been confirming the meaning of that speech. Whatever manœuvres the National Government may try they cannot hide the fact that a section that has hitherto been one of their main electoral supports is losing faith in their promises and is harassed by their policy. Lastly, the fact is to be seen clearly within the Liberal Party itself. Although some of its more reactionary figures came out in support of Chamberlain this was followed by their leaving the Liberal Party. Though there remain within it right-wing Liberals who would have been willing to assist in effect the Chamberlain candidate at the Perth bye-election against the independent Tory who had received messages of support from the Spanish people—who were willing that is to say to stab the struggle for Spain in the back—nevertheless, they were unable to carry through their splitting policy: and on the whole the Liberal Party is more clearly and openly in opposition to Chamberlain than ever before.

Though there are all these facts, of which the National Government is as acutely aware as its opponents should be, they do not in themselves draw any horoscope of the early downfall of Chamberlain. Governments can manœuvre and their manœuvres can be successful if opponents neglect opportunities. The dreadful events of 1938 were due largely to the weakness and the divided councils of the opposition. But such facts as these provide the basis on which to build a broad movement for peace, security and social advance. The opportunity is presented now to the Labour Party and the working-class generally to initiate and lead such a broad movement.

But in this matter, working-class unity becomes ever more important nationally and internationally. This does not mean only the passing of resolutions demanding that unity, though every such expression of opinion is valuable. It means work in the foundations and basic units.

It means that in every locality all the working-class organisations co-operate with one another; that the Co-operators help the Trade Unionists on strike, that the Trade Union branches strengthen the peace movement, that the fighters for peace carry their message into each Co-operative ; that all together work for aid to China and Spain, etc., etc.

It means the beginning of a still wider co-operation. The Labour Movement takes up the defence of other sections who are feeling the pressure of the millionaire concerns and their National Government. The Tenants' Defence Leagues, the Residents' Associations, include many who are not in the ranks of the working-class ; yet no member of the Labour Party would refuse on that ground to take up their defence. And if the principle holds good in this case, why not in other cases too ? For example, farmers afflicted by tithes or by the Government's agricultural policy, fishermen ruined by the inroads of the big trusts, professional workers, small shopkeepers alike suffer from monopoly capital. Common action in defence of the interests of these various sections of the people can lead to effective defence of their common interests as a whole—their interest in peace, their interest in the maintenance of democracy—and so prepare the way for the building of the People's Front. When the Labour Party, in its manifesto in April, spoke of the need of " a new and firm government " which " can inspire and lead this democratic people " it had already in this phrase departed from the narrow outlook which rejects all co-operation and keeps aloof the other sections of the population.

The programme of a common defence corresponding to the needs of the working-class and the mass of the population and for the defence of the people against Fascism is already given by the urgency of the issues confronting the people of this country. Not only the supreme issue of war and peace and the whole struggle internationally (dealt with elsewhere in this issue) but the steadily increasing effect of the economic crisis and the accompanying threats of monopoly capital to the livelihood and the liberties of the people.

Sir John Simon, Chancellor of the Exchequer, considered it his duty to tell the National Union of Manufacturers that in trade " The United Kingdom is beginning to benefit by an upward movement " (December 12, 1938). His official optimism left the Stock Exchange unmoved : for it was belied by the figures for unemployment which appeared on the same day and showed an increase in one month of 47,000.

The fact is that the crisis is deepening; the increase of unemployment comes at a time when a seasonal decrease is to be expected. Moreover, the figure of registered unemployed (1,828,000) does not reveal the full extent of unemployment. It has also been pointed out by Mr. A. V. Alexander that the basis of computation has been altered since 1931, so that this year's figures must be raised by 200,000 in order to get a

correct basis of comparison.

Meantime the threat to social services, not obscurely hinted at in the speech of Minister of Health Elliott, at the Dartford bye-election, is likely to become more open in 1939. It must be remembered that this was not an isolated statement. Six months earlier the campaign had begun in the House of Lords when the Earl of Liverpool supported a motion calling for an enquiry into the "burden of rates" (May 11, 1938). The *Daily Telegraph* commented that local expenditure was "*in the present emergency, an intolerable aggravation of the nation's burdens.*" The attack on loans raised by the local authorities, largely for social services, began even earlier with the statement of the Chairman of Lloyds' Bank last February, who said, "at a time when the primary need for defending the country is the subject of heavy additional borrowing and taxation by the central government, surely a large part of the borrowing by local governments could be postponed."

The National Register put forward by that reactionary with a record, Sir John Anderson, is correctly understood in the Trade Union Movement to be the first definite step towards industrial conscription. It follows the pattern of the period of the last imperialist war when National Register was succeeded by Attestation Scheme and Attestation Scheme by Conscription.

The attack on wages is maturing; not only in the Lancashire textile trade have wages been beaten down to the stage where the operatives are demanding as a minimum the miserable sum of 35s. per week, but the attack is clearly coming on the railways where the present hullabaloo may or may not achieve its immediate stated object but will suffice in any case as preparation for an attack on the railwaymen. The offensive against the whole of the population is gathering, co-ordinated with the offensive of Chamberlain against democracy in Europe. Therefore the struggle to rally support for Spain is at the same time the struggle to rouse the mass of the people against the National Government.

Under these circumstances it is clear that a programme for peace, democracy and social advance would win co-operation and assemble a mass force against the National Government. Such a programme could come under the following headings :

- (1) Defence of peace, with special reference to Spain.
- (2) Democratic defence of the people.
- (3) Defence of the standard of living.
- (4) Defence of democratic rights.

Every single one of these requires joint work, co-operation of the working-class organisations and, further, co-operation of the working-class itself with the mass of the people. Here is where the Communist Party has a special responsibility, together with the most active sections of the Trade Union and Co-operative Movements, and the Labour Party. That is the responsibility of stimulating and carrying forward this development. In the Crusade for Peace, to be launched this month,

Crusade for Defence of the British People 25

the Communist Party throws itself into the struggle for unity, arousing the sluggish, initiating and stimulating joint action, healing local differences, combating all the time the arguments put forward by the right-wing for keeping the Labour Movement divided.

The onus lies on the British Labour Movement as a whole. But in the measure that it is aroused, that it is united and firm as the effective core of opposition that can overthrow Chamberlain, it links up with a powerful world movement of the working-class and of the peoples struggling for independence against fascist aggression. As part of the international working-class the British Labour Movement can give the lead that is required. To enable it to give that lead is the object of the Communists. To prevent it so doing is the object of the chief opponent of the Popular Front, Mr. Neville Chamberlain, and all those right-wingers who share his views inside the Labour Party.

Under these circumstances attacks on the Communist Party only serve the purpose of the enemy. Fortunately this is at last beginning to be understood. It is no use for Mr. Bevin, in *The Record* for December, 1938, to attack the Communists and to bawl out "The main object has always been to undermine and destroy the Trade Unions and the Labour Party as an effective force." Really, this will no longer pass muster. But there are places where such wild statements may obtain credence. Therefore all who agree with the Communist Party's proposals should realise the need at the same time to fight against right-wing policy that helps Chamberlain and at the same time should realise the need to strengthen the Communist Party and to extend the influence of all its propaganda in the interests of the Labour Movement as a whole.

DEVELOPMENT FUND

					£	s.	d.
Previously Acknowledged	..	..	..	..	85	11	1
"H"	..	..	..	..	5	0	0
F.W.B. (Proceeds from Sales)	..	..	..	..	1	6	0
Anonymous	..	..	..	..	0	1	0
H.C.C., Vancouver	..	..	..	..	0	4	2
A.W., Leicester	..	..	..	..	0	3	0
C. Johnson, New Zealand	..	..	..	..	0	6	0
J. Creidenberg, U.S.A.	..	..	..	..	0	4	0
A.G.M. (In Memory of J.A.M.)	..	..	..	..	1	0	0
G. Ramsay, Chopwell	..	..	..	..	0	2	0
H.S.W., London	..	..	..	..	0	10	0
Nelson, Cambridge	..	..	..	..	4	2	6
					£98	9	9

The Men Behind Munich

BY EDMUND H. FETTER

ON THE 3RD of October, 1938, the Marquess of Londonderry said in the House of Lords :

I welcome particularly the events of the last two weeks by reason of a direct contact having been made with our Prime Minister and the Government of Germany. I, in a very humble manner, have been endeavouring for four years to do exactly the same thing.

. . . . I can say quite honestly that what has happened has been the fulfilment of the hopes which I have had in mind. I have seen what I have urged and what I have desired . . . I spent Thursday and Friday in Munich as a private individual. . . .

Lord Londonderry told a reporter that during his stay in Munich he met General Göring and Herr von Ribbentrop*. The Munich agreement was the result of a consistent policy followed by the right-wing section of the Conservative Party over a period of years. This is the gist of Lord Londonderry's statement, and Lord Londonderry is not only an ex-member of the Cabinet, but President of the Conservative Party Organisation.

In the " Notes of the Month " in the November issue of the LABOUR MONTHLY, two more leading figures in the Conservative Party were mentioned as among those responsible for the policy which led to the München agreement, namely Lord McGowan, Chairman of Imperial Chemical Industries, and Lord Stamp, Chairman of the London, Midland and Scottish Railway, both of whom met Hitler at the Nuremberg Congress this year. It is clear, however, that there must be many more equally influential people " behind Munich." Tremendous pressure must have been exerted on the Government to ensure a settlement which has been so profitable to Hitler and so disastrous for democracy.

Who have been most fulsome in their praise of the Munich agreement? In the October issue (Vol. II, No. 11) of the *Anglo-German Review* there are a series of messages from well-known people in praise of the agreement which gives us a clue. Among them we find Lord Mount Temple, Chairman of the Anglo-German Fellowship, Admiral Sir Barry Domville, K.B.E., member of the Council of the Anglo-German Fellowship, Sir Raymond Beazley, member of the Council of the Anglo-German Fellowship; also Viscount Esher, Lord Arnold, Lord Redesdale, the Duke of Wellington, and Geoffrey Hutchinson

**Manchester Guardian*, October 1, 1938.

(M.P. for Ilford), all individual members of the Anglo-German Fellowship. Each of these gentlemen has sent a separate and considered statement to the *Anglo-German Review*. Equally interesting is the fact that Lords Londonderry, McGowan and Stamp are also individual members of the Anglo-German Fellowship.* In the *Times* of October 11, there is a letter signed by a number of well-known people in praise of the Munich agreement. Once again we find Lord Mount Temple, Lord Londonderry, Admiral Sir Barry Domville, Lord Arnold, Sir Raymond Beazley, Lord Redesdale; but also Mr. C. E. Carrol, Mr. A. E. R. Dyer, Mr. Douglas Jerrold, Professor A. P. Laurie, Admiral Wilmot Nicholson, *all* members of the Anglo-German Fellowship. We come to the inevitable conclusion that a considerable and influential section of the "Men behind Munich" are members of the Anglo-German Fellowship.

The Anglo-German Fellowship replaced the old Anglo-German Association which up to 1932 existed to foster friendship between England and Germany. The society was dissolved in 1933 because it was not favoured by the Nazis; Lord Reading, the President, resigned as a protest against the persecution of the Jews. A reporter from the *News Review* interviewed the secretary at that time, Mr. Elwin Wright, in January, 1936. The *News Review* states that the members are :

distinguished representatives of British Big Business, who claim Hitler has an "unanswerable case," who plan to set up a lavishly-equipped club in London at which Nazi-ism can be preached, Ministers of National-Socialism entertained, fêted.

Mr. Wright told the *News Review* reporter :

. . . it isn't numbers that matter. We want "Names," otherwise how can we have any influence with the Government or the Foreign Office.† The Anglo-German Fellowship was thus founded partly for the express purpose of influencing British Foreign policy. In this they have undoubtedly been successful.

There is the Anglo-German Kameradschaft, Anglo-German Circle, Anglo-German Academic Bureau, but more important than these organisations is "The Link."

. . . Admiral Sir Barry Domville, friend of Herr Hitler, Herr von Ribbentrop, Herr Himmler and other leaders of the New Germany . . . has set about creating friendship, personal, individual friendship. . . . Hence "The Link." The Link has been forging for many months. Twice Sir Barry Domville has been Herr Hitler's guest. Recently he went chamois shooting for a week in the company of Herr Himmler, head of the S.S. detachments.

Result—not only has the Link organisation begun to spread in this country but a corresponding movement has been founded in Germany.

The Link is . . . Sir Barry Domville's own creation—he is its founder and first Chairman. . . . "In England," he told me yesterday, "there are a large number of Anglo-German societies . . . But there's no co-ordination . . . that is why some of us came to the conclusion that

*According to Annual Report, 1936-7, Anglo-German Fellowship.

†Labour Research, March, 1936.

a really popular organisation was needed. . . . Already we have nearly a thousand direct members and branches have been founded in Birmingham, Southend, Chelsea and Bayswater. Others are about to be formed in Belfast, Croydon, Maldon, Oxford, Aberdeen and Cape Town.

. . . We hope to enrol Germans in London and other parts of the country. They will meet English members at social gatherings . . . lectures, film shows.

. . . Herr Hitler himself is very keen on the movement.*

Admiral Sir Barry Domvile was Assistant-Secretary, Committee of Imperial Defence, 1912-14, Director of Naval Intelligence Division, 1927-30, and only retired in 1936. The Vice-Chairman of The Link is Sir Raymond Beazley, and the members of its Council are Lord Redesdale, Lord Sempill, C. E. Carroll, Professor Laurie, A. E. R. Dyer and Archibald Crawford, *all* members of the Anglo-German Fellowship.

These people do not, however, only concern themselves with Britain and Germany. They support Fascism in every country. Mr. Douglas Jerrold and Major F. Yeats-Brown, members of the Anglo-German Fellowship, are also members of the Friends of National Spain and the Spanish Children's Repatriation Committee, the two most important pro-Franco organisations in Britain. The Duke of Wellington is a member of the Spanish Children's Repatriation Committee together with Lady Londonderry and Viscount Castlereagh (M.P. for County Down), wife and son of Lord Londonderry respectively. The Duke of Wellington and Lord Londonderry have already been mentioned as members of the Anglo-German Fellowship. Sir Henry Page-Croft (M.P. for Bournemouth) is a member of the Friends of National Spain and has also written to the *Anglo-German Review* in praise of the Munich agreement. The members of the Anglo-German Fellowship in the House of Commons and House of Lords are among the most ardent supporters of General Franco.

Another organisation of the same character is the "United Christian Front." Mr. Angus Watson, signatory to the original appeal who resigned, said in a letter to the *Times*.†

I since have learnt that this letter is being used for party political propaganda and in support of General Franco's policy as opposed to that of the present Spanish Government.

The opinion of Mr. Angus Watson is borne out by the fact that its Chairman, Captain A. H. M. Ramsay (M.P. for Midlothian and Peebles) was a signatory to a letter from The Link which appeared in the *Times* on October 11, 1938, while Lord Phillimore, Chairman of the Friends of National Spain, is also a member of the United Christian Front.

A still further organisation is the Friends of Italy.

The recent Anglo-Italian Pact has been received with particular

**The Observer*, November 24, 1937.

†November 20, 1937.

satisfaction in this country by the movement known as "The Friends of Italy." Sir Harry Brittain, the Hon. President, is now the moving spirit. . . . Preparations are now being made for the formation distinct from but affiliated with the Friends of Italy of an Anglo-Italian political and economic Council. . . . Sir Harry Brittain has been keeping in touch with his Excellency Count Grandi, whose advice and support will prove invaluable in the development of any schemes to be decided upon.*

Sir Harry Brittain is also a member of the Anglo-German Fellowship.

The organisation itself has entertained many leading Nazis in this country including von Ribbentrop, von Blomberg, Freiherr von Hadeln, Adjutant to Himmler head of the German Secret Police, Duke of Saxe-Coburg-Gotha, etc. Many leading members have been to Germany to see Hitler, Göring, Himmler and other Nazi leaders. At a dinner on December 2, 1937, at which Lord Halifax was a guest, von Ribbentrop said that the Anglo-German Fellowship "had made ultimately possible" the visit of Lord Halifax to Berlin.

The real basis of the pro-Fascist policy of the organisation is fear and hatred of the Soviet Union :

If we were to isolate Germany and therefore prove to the German people that Herr Hitler had failed them, deluded them, betrayed them, eventually they will discard him and seek another God . . . there is only one, the anti-Christ of Communism ; if that change were to take place, Russia has a ready and accessible adherent.†

These are the words of Sir Thomas Moore (M.P. for Ayr, Burghs), who is a member of the Council of the Anglo-German Fellowship. Sir Arnold Wilson (M.P. for Hitchin), another Nazi supporter, makes the same point in a different way :

Let us not assume that Germany is the potential enemy against whom we must combine, but look further afield. To ignore the vast war preparations of Soviet Russia . . . is to do an ill-service to Europe. . . . In ten years time she may be stronger than any two powers in Europe on land and in the air and she may find allies. If war should come it will not be . . . where or when Mr. Churchill expects it.‡

A Four-Power Pact is one of the aims of many members of the Anglo-German Fellowship.

The Marquess of Londonderry said . . . he had always been in favour of a four power Pact with Great Britain, France, Italy and Germany.§

The extreme anti-Soviet opinions of these people make the purpose of such a Pact only too clear.

How great is the influence of these people ? How far are they really able to impress their policy on the Government ? The Government's policy of support for Hitler, for Mussolini and for Franco is convincing proof of the support in Parliament and among financial circles for such a pro-Fascist policy. The Fascist supporters in Parliament are particularly important. The following list only includes a fraction of the pro-

**Observer*, May 29, 1938.

†Sir Thomas Moore, M.P., in *Sunday Dispatch*, October 22, 1933.

‡*Evening Standard*, May 5, 1936.

§*The Times*, February 25, 1938.

Fascist Conservatives in the House of Commons.

CONSERVATIVE M.P.s

M.P.

Constituency

Members of the Council of the Anglo-German Fellowship

Norman J. Hulbert	Stockport
Lt.-Col. Sir Thomas Moore	Ayr, Burghs
Sir Assheton Pownall	Lewisham, E.

Individual members of the Anglo-German Fellowship

Lt.-Com. Peter Agnew	Camborne, Cornwall
Lt.-Col. J. Sandeman Allen	Birkenhead, W.
The Hon. W. W. Astor (Parliamentary Private Secretary, Home Office)	Fulham, E.

Sir Ernest Bennett	Cardiff, Central
Sir Robert Bird	Wolverhampton, W.
Com. R. T. Bower	Cleveland, Yorks.
Clement Davies, K.C.	Montgomery
Sir Robert Gower	Gillingham
Loel T. B. Guinness	Bath
H. Cobden Haslam	Horncastle
Norman J. Hulbert	Stockport
Geoffrey Hutchinson	Ilford
Wing Comm. A. W. H. James	Wellingborough
Maj.-Gen. Sir Alfred Knox	Wycombe
Lt.-Col. G. K. M. Mason	Croydon, N.
Lt.-Col. Sir Thomas Moore	Ayr Burghs
Sir Assheton Pownall	Lewisham, E.
Major Ralph Rayner	Totnes, Devon
Sir Alexander Russell	Tynemouth
Stuart Russell	Darwen Lancs.
Sir Frank Sanderson, Bt.	Ealing
Sir L. W. Smith	Hallam, Sheffield
Major the Hon. J. J. Stourton	Salford, S.
Rear-Admiral Sir Murray Sueter	Hertford
Lt.-Col. Edward T. R. Wickham	Taunton, Somerset

Members connected with the "Link" (Times, 11.10.38.)

Sir John Smedley Crooke	Deritend
Capt. A. H. M. Ramsay	Peebles

Members of Friends of National Spain

Capt. Victor Cazalet	Chippenham
Sir N. Stewart Sandeman	Middleton & Prestwich
Sir Henry Page-Croft	Bournemouth
Alan T. Lennox-Boyd (resigned)	Bedford, Mid.

Spanish Children's Repatriation Committee

Sir Arnold Wilson (Chairman)	Hitchin
Capt. Victor Cazalet	Chippenham
Sir N. Stewart Sandeman	Middleton & Prestwich
Viscount Castlereagh	County Down

United Christian Front

Capt. A. H. M. Ramsay (Chairman)	Peebles
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The representation of the Anglo-German Fellowship in the House of Lords is even more extensive. It includes the following names : Aberdare, Airlie, Arnold (a member of the Council), Barnby, Bertie of

Thame, Brocket, Carisbrooke, Decies, Eltisley (member of the Council), Esher, Galloway, Glasgow, Harrowby, Hollenden (member of the Council), Hutchison of Montrose, Londonderry, Lothian, McGowan, Malmesbury, Massereene and Ferrard, Mottistone, Mount Temple, Nuffield, Redesdale, Rennell of Rodd, Sanderson, Sempill, Stamp, Wellington.

Other noble families are also well-represented. Thus among the membership we find the Hon. Walter Runciman, son of Lord Runciman who did so much to prepare the way for the Munich agreement. There are also Lords David and Malcolm Douglas-Hamilton; the former recently married Miss Prunella Stack, leader of the Women's League of Health and Beauty.*

The wealth and privilege of these people is an anachronism in a democratic society and it is for that reason that they care little about British democracy. Their German counterparts are the people who put Hitler in power, their Spanish counterparts are General Franco's masters, their French counterparts are the initiators of the Cagouards and Croix de Feu. Their intrigues with foreign tyrants show their natural affinity with the wealthy and privileged aristocracy of other lands.

The members of the House of Commons listed above are in no real sense different from the members of the House of Lords. They belong to the same social class. Astor, Mason, Stourton, etc., are actually sons of peers. They are all wealthy and reactionary. But while Tory Prime Ministers must bear the responsibility for the composition of the House of Lords, the electorate is responsible for the membership of the House of Commons. We can be sure that many of the M.P.s listed above would never have been elected if the electorate had understood the policy which they represent. Many of them will not be re-elected if the Labour Movement explains their policy to the electorate in these constituencies. These M.P.s are supporting and advocating a policy for which they have no mandate from the people, and for which the people would never give them a mandate. They were elected because they pretended to support the League of Nations, pretended to be opposed to Mussolini's rape of Abyssinia, pretended to be opposed to Hitler's rape of the German people. The Labour Movement has the urgent task in the constituencies named, and many others besides, of explaining to the people the treachery of their elected Parliamentary representatives.

During the last few years a leading section of the Conservative Party has been moving to the Right. Leading Conservatives are responsible for setting-up the organisations we have described. A process of organising the Fascist supporters in this country has been taking place rapidly and to a great extent secretly. Behind this process we find many of the best-known figures in British finance either as active organisers or passive supporters. The banks, whose directors are

*Particulars are from the Annual Report of the Anglo-German Fellowship, 1936-7.

members of the Anglo-German Fellowship,* make an impressive list :

<i>Bank</i>	<i>Directors (Members of Anglo-German Fellowship)</i>
Bank of England	F. C. Tiarks (Member of the Council of the Fellowship)
	Lord Stamp
Midland Bank	Lord McGowan
	Lt.-Col. the Hon. G. K. M. Mason, M.P.
Lloyds Bank	The Hon. Walter Runciman
National Bank of Scotland	Lord Lothian (Governor)
	Sir Donald Cameron (Deputy-Governor)
National Bank of Australasia	Lord Hutchison of Montrose
J. Henry Schröder	F. C. Tiarks
(Merchant Bankers)	H. F. Tiarks
	H. W. B. Schroder
British Linen Bank	Earl of Airlie (Deputy-Governor)
	Robert L. Barclay
Ralli Bros.	P. J. Calvocoressi
	H. Pfister
National Bank of Egypt	Sir Sidney Peel
Coutts & Co.	Earl of Harrowby

Equally important and equally well-represented are the Insurance Companies. All the following Companies and many others besides have directors who are members of the Anglo-German Fellowship :

Commercial Union Assurance
 Eagle Star
 Phoenix Assurance
 London Assurance
 London and Lancashire
 Guardian Assurance
 Norwich Union Fire Insurance
 General Accident Fire & Life Assurance
 National Employers' Mutual General Insurance, etc. . . .

The list of industrial concerns with directors who are members of the Anglo-German Fellowship is even more impressive. Here we have only space to give the names of a few concerns of world importance. Lever Bros. and Unilever Limited is a concern with an issued capital of £67,445,925 and has a practical monopoly of soap and margarine throughout the British Empire. The Chairman, F. D'Arcy Cooper, is a member of the Council of the Anglo-German Fellowship, and three directors, Clement Davies, M.P., C. W. Barnish and the Marquess of Carisbrooke (advisory) are members. In the "List of Donations in the Year 1936-37" to the Anglo-German Fellowship, "Messrs. Unilever Limited" is "top" with £250. We have already mentioned Lord McGowan, who is Chairman of Imperial Chemical Industries, which has an issued capital of £74,202,683. The concern has a practical monopoly of heavy chemicals. Another member is Andrew Agnew, managing director of "Shell" Transport and Trading Co., which

*According to the Annual Report, 1936-7.

has an issued capital of £40,945,633. Mr. F. C. Tiarks, who has already been mentioned, is a director of the Anglo-Iranian Oil Company, which has an issued capital of £32,843,752. Sir D. Milne-Watson is governor and managing-director of the Gas, Light and Coke Company with an issued capital of £29,299,636. Archibald V. Board and Sir Alexander Walker are directors of "Distillers" which has a capital of £12,890,962 (their £1 shares stand at £4 10s. od.). This concern produces the greater part of our whisky, gin and other spirits. Of the four Main-Line Railways, we have already mentioned Lord Stamp, who is Chairman of the London Midland and Scottish Railway, and the Hon. Walter Runciman is on the Board of the London and North Eastern Railway. These concerns are all among the largest in the world. They are very representative of those sections of British finance which dominate the Conservative Party.

Many other firms have directors among the members of the Anglo-German Fellowship. Among them we find such well-known companies as Tate and Lyle, Hudson's Bay Company, Pickfords', Earls Court Ltd., Imperial Airways, John Lewis Partnership, Sir Henry Lunn Ltd., Thos. Cook and Sons, William Beardmore Limited, Short Bros. (Rochester and Bedford) Ltd. (Aircraft), Consett Spanish Ore Co., British Oxygen Co., Carter Paterson, Pressed Steel Co. of Oxford, and so on.

The recently appointed panel of six business men which is to advise on the speeding up of Rearmament includes Mr. D'Arcy Cooper mentioned as chairman of Unilevers above, a member of Council of Anglo-German Fellowship, and Sir Geoffrey Clarke, President of The Associated Chambers of Commerce of Great Britain, also a member of the Anglo-German Fellowship.*

The biggest industrialists, the most wealthy financiers and land-owners are the "leaders" of the Anglo-German Fellowship. They are the same people who for generations have been the backbone of the British Conservative Party. They are still loyal to their Party but they have decided that something more is needed. As in Germany the biggest monopolists are going Fascist first.

It is not a long step from support for Fascism on the European Continent, to support for Fascism in England. The British people and the British Labour Movement must watch every move of these people, for it is they who will seek to destroy British democracy. We have no longer just to contend with Mosley's Blackshirts. These are now only one of a whole series of organised movements who work unceasingly against democracy, and increasingly against British democracy. Our greatest enemies are within the National Government and among that Government's supporters in the House of Commons. These are the people that the Labour Movement must attack, for democracy can never be safe while they hold the reins of Government.

**Manchester Guardian*, December 13, 1938.

We have got to defeat that Government, and this can only be done if we attack the Government's supporters in the House of Commons fearlessly. There are unfortunately many Conservative M.P.s who have supported General Franco openly in the House of Commons and not 1 in 50 of his constituents have ever heard of it. The Labour Movement must make these members of Parliament pay in votes for their policy. If the Press refuses to report their activities to the constituents, then the Labour Movement must report them. It is not enough to attack the National Government in general, but our local Labour and Communist Parties must attack the pro-Fascist M.P. vigorously and personally for his political activities. They must show the policy of the Labour candidate in contrast to the Tory M.P.s policy in practice. We must clear the Fascist supporters out of the House of Commons. That is one of our first duties.

The policy of the National Government towards the war in Spain is still the most urgent question. The job of the local Labour movement in every constituency where there is a Conservative M.P. is to find out and publicise his attitude towards Spain.

* * *

[NOTE : Since the above article was written Lord Mount Temple has resigned the Chairmanship of the Anglo-German Fellowship :

Lord Mount Temple said to a Press representative last night : "Although I have resigned from the chair of the Anglo-German Fellowship, I still remain a member of the Fellowship."—*The Times*, November 19, 1938.

The *Evening Standard* of November 19, wrote : Now Lord Mount Temple gives courageously the reason for his resignation. It is, he says, "a protest against the treatment of the Jews by the German Government."

The reason in his case is doubly justified. His first wife was a daughter of Sir Ernest Cassel, the financier and philanthropist.

Sir Ernest, who became a naturalised British subject in 1878, was born in Cologne of Jewish descent.

Were Lord Mount Temple a German subject, this non-Aryan connection would be enough to make him ineligible for the chairmanship of the Deutsch-Englische Gesellschaft in Berlin.

It is of course possible that other persons named in the article have even resigned from membership of the Fellowship, though we have no information to this effect.]

The People's Front and the Class Struggle in France

BY CLEMENS DUTT

REACTION IN FRANCE is celebrating the "downfall of the People's Front." After eight months since the formation of the Daladier Government, during which time the parliament has been allowed to sit for less than fifty hours, Daladier felt he had enough support from the Centre and from the fascists and extreme reactionaries of the Right to dare to face his former friends of the left-wing. On December 10 he secured a majority of 74, but only by trampling on all his former professions of faith and by making himself prisoner to the reactionary elements he had once denounced.

The defeat of the People's Front in the French Chamber does not mean the defeat of the People's Front as a mass popular movement, it does not mean the collapse of the mass forces supporting it in the country. On the contrary, it marks the opening of a period of intense class struggle, a period of sharp conflict in all spheres between the forces of the working class and democratic petty-bourgeoisie with the forces of reaction and fascism. In this critical phase now entered, the fate of the democratic régime in France will be decided.

How has this state of things come about in face of the fact that a majority of the electorate voted for the People's Front and for the programme submitted to it by the People's Front in 1936, a vote confirmed in all by-elections since then? What are the factors that have made possible the transformation of the People's Front Government into a government without a mandate from the country, pursuing a policy approved by those who were defeated at the General Election?

It is a favourite theory of certain sections of the Labour Party, and particularly of certain officials at Transport House, that the key to this development, the root of the whole evil, is to be found in the fatal policy of an alliance between the Socialists and groups outside it. They attempt to make out that the fate of the French People's Front is a warning for the Labour Party in England, a warning against the Labour Party entering into a common front with parties or groups outside it. They now argue that the People's Front in France was bound to break down because of the ill-advised alliance of the French Socialist Party with the French Radicals.

Representatives of the Labour Party right wing, whose zeal for Socialism in practice was not particularly evident in the history of MacDonaldism, Mondism, Munichism, and indeed in the whole history of the Labour Party from 1914 onwards, now suddenly discover that nothing but socialism will suffice. The editor of the *Daily Herald* talks of the need for a great socialist crusade, saying that nothing is to be gained by putting socialism in cold storage and that the Labour Party cause "can only be harmed by alliance with those who do not share our views." In order to find a weapon to resist the growing demand for a democratic Front to overthrow the Chamberlain Government before it has done irreparable damage by submerging all Europe in the horrors of fascism and war, the argument is put forward that the People's Front itself is responsible for the crisis in France and the onslaught of reaction.

The palpable absurdity of this view is at once evident from a consideration of the history of the French People's Front and of the underlying factors governing the development it has undergone. Four periods can be distinguished in the history that has just come to a close, the end of each period being marked by an acute financial crisis as the outward sign of a point reached in the continuous offensive of French and foreign finance capital against the People's Front alliance. The first stage, that of victorious upsurge, lasted from June, 1936 to March, 1937. Thereafter came the "pause" the slowing up of social advance that lasted until the financial crisis of January, 1938. This was followed by a short period of uncertainty which ended with the formation of the Daladier Government in April of this year. Then began the period of disintegration, the period of transition leading to Munich and the collapse of the People's Front in Parliament. It is necessary to examine this history in a little more detail.

THE PERIOD OF UPSURGE

The victory of the People's Front at the elections in May, 1936 was prepared by the successful development of the United Front from 1934 onwards, the democratic front of the masses of the people initiated by the French Communist Party, the victorious unity that defeated the attempted fascist coup of February, 1934 and for the time being destroyed the danger of fascism as an aggressive force in France.

At the elections in May, 1936 the People's Front candidates with their common programme of immediate social reforms, obtained 381 seats out of 618, the Socialists having 156 seats and the Communists 73. Owing to the system of voting in two successive ballots, a simple majority sufficing in the second round, the candidates of the People's Front came before the electorate as a *bloc*, many Radicals for instance owing their election in the second round to Socialist and Communist votes. When the Blum Government presented itself to the Chamber on June 6, 1936, it declared :

The ministry is the expression of the People's Front majority which the country has desired. Its programme is the joint programme subscribed to by all the parties composing the majority and the sole problem before it will be to realise the programme in acts.

A considerable section of the programme was in fact actually realised in the succeeding months, perhaps not so much as the result of the Government's fighting determination as the effect of the powerful wave of strikes which convinced French capitalism of the need for immediate concessions. The experience of the People's Front during this stage confirms the experience of the class struggle everywhere in Europe since the last war. Just as in the period of victorious working-class struggle immediately after the war, capitalism was ready to make very considerable temporary sacrifices as long as its fundamental positions remained untouched and it could by this means gain a breathing space in which to set about undermining and annulling the gains recorded by the working class.

During this early period Parliamentary resistance was comparatively slight. As declared early in June, 1936, by the notorious Gignoux, President of the Confederation of Employers' Associations and spokesman for the powerful Comité des Forges: "We have no intention of participating in the classic parliamentary game because the driving force for action quite clearly lies outside parliament." But the reaction could make no headway against the mass movement that had been set in motion, and attempts to organise fascist parties, such as Doriot's anti-Communist Party, or to split the unity of the People's Front in the country, met with very little success.

French capitalism, however, had one very powerful lever at its command and from the beginning it began to set this in operation. Acting in conjunction with British financial and government forces, the closely-knit French financial oligarchy began a series of economic counter measures, first of all by sending its capital abroad, secondly by forcing through devaluation of the franc and thirdly by a deliberate campaign of sabotage against French industry and national economy. Already by September, 1936, some 40 milliard of francs had taken flight abroad since the spring and the government was compelled to agree to the first devaluation of the franc and the conclusion of the tri-partite agreement with the U.S.A. and Britain which resulted in Britain obtaining a stranglehold over French finance.

THE PERIOD OF "PAUSE"

The financial difficulty made it necessary for Blum to announce in March, 1937, the so-called "pause," a decision to conciliate French finance capital by suspending further reforms. The "pause" was explained as a temporary interval for consolidation but it soon became a permanent halt.

When the pause came, a number of vital measures of the People's

Front programme had not yet been put into application. These were not measures in the least of a socialist character, nor measures affecting the class foundations of the state. The omissions, however, included not only social reforms such as old-age pensions and political measures like the suppression of fascist organisations and purging of the diplomatic service and civil administration, but also the most vital economic measures for preventing the flight of capital abroad and for balancing the budget by means of much overdue reforms in the system of taxation. The agreed programme of the People's Front expressly laid down what should be done. It called for :

Democratic reform of the taxation system involving the creation of resources by measures attacking big fortunes (rapid increase of general income tax on incomes above 75,000 francs annually, taxation of profits of monopolies) while avoiding all repercussion on consumption prices . . . Suppression of fraud in taxation payments. Control of the export of capital and severe measures against evasion, going as far as confiscation of resources hidden abroad.

Thus the People's Front programme laid down very clearly what its government was intended to do. The consequence of the omission to apply any part of this financial programme was that by June, 1937, some 60 milliard francs of capital had fled abroad and the attempt of the banks to strangle the treasury by refusing credits, together with the campaign of finance capital to sabotage production and sow panic, led to a new financial crisis. In this crisis, in the face of the irresolution shown by the Blum Government after a year of the People's Front in power, the Senate summoned up courage to defeat Blum's proposals by 168 votes to 96.

Instead of fighting this resistance to the will of the popular majority, Blum resigned at once and made way for another mixed Radical and Socialist Government, with a slightly more Radical tinge, headed by the Radical Chautemps. The talk of "pause" increased, the bourgeois press began to expatiate on the need for a change of "political climate" and for orthodox measures of financial rehabilitation. Nevertheless, the National Committee of the People's Front firmly declared : "There is possible no other programme, no other majority and no other government than those demanded by the majority of the nation," and the Chautemps Government was accorded "full powers" to deal with the situation.

The French Communist Party published a manifesto dealing with the situation under the new government, noting the intrigues proceeding against the People's Front, and stressing that there was no other way of remedying the financial situation than that laid down in the People's Front programme—defence of the franc and balancing the budget at the expense of the rich. The Party reiterated its readiness to take responsibility in a strengthened government formed in the image of the People's Front.

The continued hold of the People's Front in the country as a whole

was clearly shown by the cantonal elections in October. In spite of the disappointment in large sections at the hesitation to apply the programme, and in spite of the tendency shown by a few right-wing Radicals to cut loose from the People's Front, the results of some 3,500 elections showed that the People's Front commanded an even greater majority of the electorate than in May, 1936. At the end of October, the Radical Party held its annual Congress at Lille, and adopted a resolution declaring :

The Radical Party to-day does not intend any more than yesterday to entertain the hypothesis of an alliance with the men of the Right. It intends to remain faithful to the alliances into which it has entered.

Within a year the Party was to break its faith and entertain the very hypothesis here repudiated. The end of 1937 saw increasing endeavours on the part of reaction in France to sow dissension and split the People's Front. It is significant that in December, 1937, the Socialist Party suspended all *pourparlers* with the Communist Party on the question of unity.

THE PERIOD OF UNCERTAINTY AND BRITISH ATTACK

In January, 1938, the attack of finance capital, acting in close conjunction with Britain and operating especially by the exchange attack on the franc, reached a new culmination. Even the French right-wing press more or less openly admitted that the new crisis was provoked by the British Government. The British rôle in dictating French policy began to come more and more into the open. Nevertheless, there was no hint of this in the official Labour Party press in England, which was only concerned to underline the weakness of the French People's Front and to thunder against democratic unity.

Chautemps was forced to announce that he would try to win the support of the banks, i.e., that he would follow a policy acceptable to the Right, and the Socialists found themselves compelled to withdraw their support bringing about the fall of the government. The political crisis lasted for two weeks. Blum spoke of trying to form a government representative of all parties of the People's Front, but he made no practical effort to do so and finally Chautemps returned with a purely Radical Government which, however, set out with a declaration more left than that of the previous one. It assured the Chamber that there would be no interference with the social gains, it promised the introduction of reforms contained in the People's Front programme, including old-age pensions and action against the fascist conspirators. Thereby it secured the unanimous vote of the whole Chamber, the Communists supporting it for the sake of the People's Front, and the Right because they must have been aware of the hollowness of the promises.

For a moment there was a renewed wave of enthusiasm. The Government started to draft a code of Labour Laws which it grandiloquently

termed a "Modern Charter of Labour." But by March already the link with Chamberlain became more obvious than ever and Chautemps was demanding "exceptional powers" for measures which involved practically abandoning the whole People's Front programme, reducing expenditure on social services, forgetting all about old-age pensions and calling for "greater flexibility" in the 40-hour week. There was a wave of protest in the country and Chautemps resigned.

This was at the moment when Hitler invaded Austria, and in the situation thereby created Blum undertook to form a National Government of Union round the People's Front, representing all parties of the Left and Centre. The Central Committee of the French Communist Party on March 12 declared it would support the "rallying of all Republican forces of the country with a view to realising the programme demanded by the electorate." However, French reaction with strong British assistance pulled every string to prevent the realisation of this plan, especially stressing the danger of displeasing Hitler by allowing Communists into the Government, and so Blum formed his second government containing like the first only Radicals and Socialists.

He obviously considered it only a stop gap and it showed itself as the weakest of all the People's Front Governments hitherto. In foreign policy, it did not even condemn the annexation of Austria and it made no step to stop the blockade of the Spanish frontier. Internally, it was soon exposed by the usual financial crisis.

This time, April, 1938, it was revealed that the financial position of the country was absolutely desperate. Great play was made with the increasing budget deficit. The Bank reserves were said to be below the level necessary for national defence. The discredited politicians of reaction, Laval and Flandin, now reappear as spokesmen of the Right. They preach the necessity of concessions to and agreement with foreign fascism, and hint at the need for a government of public safety, the suppression of parliament and dissolution of the trade unions. The outlines of the Chamberlain Plan become clearly evident, viz., by financial pressure and the help of the Right to split the Radicals from the Left *bloc* and to draw the French Government into the British Plan of negotiation with the fascist aggressors and thus prepare the way for a Four Power Pact.

The Socialist Party could not face the storm and let it be known that it contemplated retiring into opposition. The French Communist Party declared that this would only help to hand the people over to reaction and foreign fascism and pressed for united resistance with the slogan of the unification of all forces of the French people for national salvation. But in April Blum resigned and the Daladier Government took office, containing only Radicals and even including one or two elements of the Centre outside the People's Front. The Government announced that it would be loyal to the People's Front, but made no precise statement of obligations.

DALADIER'S BLOW AGAINST THE PEOPLE'S FRONT

Events now began to move rapidly both externally and internally. Stage by stage the transition to a Right coalition proceeded but the collapse even of the parliamentary People's Front could not be brought about all at once. Daladier dispensed with Parliament and governed by means of emergency decrees. In May a fourth devaluation took place.

In June the Socialist Party Congress met at Royan. Blum admitted that he had placed too much reliance on the enemies of the working class movement and too much faith in their desire for conciliation. But the discussion turned mainly on action in the parliamentary framework and Blum's motion for continued support of Daladier received a two-to-one majority.

The last stages of disintegration came quickly. In August Daladier made his famous speech threatening the forty-hour week. His subsequent appearance as the champion of the anti-working class forces was foreshadowed by his repression of the Marseilles dock strikers. Then came the Czechoslovakian crisis showing Daladier in the rôle of humble echo to Chamberlain.

It is hardly necessary to give details of the recent events since the Munich betrayal. The Munich surrender was not a sudden reversal of policy but only a link in the policy of capitulation which had been prepared for by all the preceding history. It, however, marks a turning point where the fight of reaction against the People's Front comes into the open, exposing the close connection between the foreign policy of reaction and the internal attack against the working class and democracy.

The immediate consequences of Munich are seen in the Government's break with the People's Front, the onslaught against the workers and the development of French foreign policy in the direction of the Four Power Pact, the Franco-German Pact, with tacit repudiation of the obligations of the Franco-Soviet Pact and the free hand for Hitler in the East.

Already in the Radical Congress at Marseilles on October 27, Daladier's attack against the working class, and especially against the Communist Party, foreshadowed the complete breach with the Left. On November 10, the National Committee of the People's Front met but only to take cognisance of the refusal of the Radical delegates to attend. On November 14, the emergency decrees were issued virtually abolishing the 40-hour week and balancing the budget by savage anti-working class measures. The Socialists, who had still given conditional support to Daladier in the National Council meeting of November 5, were driven into opposition.

The last stage, complete dependence of the government on reactionary votes, was reached in the meeting of the Finance Commission of the Chamber on November 22. By threatening to cancel the visit of Chamberlain fixed for the next day, Daladier got his decrees approved by

20 votes to 18, the majority containing some radicals and all the reactionaries, but he was actually in a minority as 5 Radicals abstained from voting.

The general strike on November 30 and the methods of terror and repression with which it was met mark the opening of a new phase of intense class struggle. When the Chamber met on December 8, Daladier had to listen to the ominous warning of the spokesman for the reactionaries, Fernand-Laurent, who declared: "If we vote for you, you must govern with us." The head of the erstwhile People's Front Government was told that he must be at the orders of the enemies of the People's Front.

THE UNDERLYING FACTORS OF DEVELOPMENT

In reviewing the factors in this development it becomes evident that the rôle of the Chamberlain Government has been of paramount importance. The difficulties of the People's Front in France must be ascribed in the first place to the failure of the democratic forces in England to cope with British reaction and to come to the aid of the democratic forces in France. The financial oligarchy in France, "the 200 families" controlling the banks and big trusts, has enormous power but it could not have succeeded without the help of British reaction. With the help of the latter, in order to smash the People's Front and assist the Chamberlain policy, it deliberately embarked on the path of betraying French national interests and national security for the sake of its class interests. It deliberately weakened French defensive capacity and sabotaged production necessary for national safety.

The progressive abandonment of the People's Front programme can only be understood in the light of the economic situation and the pressure from abroad. Nevertheless, an important responsibility attaches to the French Socialist Party, whose intrinsic weakness and hesitation is not to be explained solely by the exigencies of alliance with the Radical Party. The fatal policy of "non-intervention" in Spain was not dictated by the Radicals, it was the cherished and strongly defended policy of Blum himself, acting it is true under advice and pressure from Britain. The initial mistake of shrinking from the application of the agreed financial programme of the People's Front was not dictated by the Radicals and cannot be explained away by talking of the necessity for more "socialist" measures. The weakness of the Socialist Party during the Czechoslovakian crisis culminating in their support for the Munich Pact in the Chamber, and support afterwards withdrawn, is not wholly to be explained by the desire to conciliate their allies.

Another factor which has had its effect in the regression of the last two years is the check to further consolidation of democratic unity. Reaction in France has waged a continuous campaign to prevent

and disrupt unity, provoking dissension within the working class and the People's Front by all possible means, including the use of Trotskyist agents. All its efforts to break up the unified C.G.T. with its five million members failed, but it has been able to hold back the development of working-class unity.

The demand for working-class unity during this period raised the problem of the fusion of the Socialist and Communist Parties. A unification commission was set up amid the enthusiasm of the membership of both parties. But the opponents of unity to the Labour Party leadership hindered the work of the Commission. When by June, 1937, the Communist Party had 330,000 members, an increase of 200,000 in a single year, as compared with 230,000 members of the Socialist Party, the opponents of unity made play with the argument that the socialists would be submerged in a united party.

The Marseilles Congress of the Socialist Party in July, 1937, called on its local sections to leave the search for unity to the central bodies. This was to check the growing left wing. The Central Committee of the French Communist Party at once responded by accepting all the conditions laid down and suggesting immediate practical steps. Among them were proposals for joint meetings of the Socialist Administrative Committee and the Communist Central Committee, and of the parliamentary fractions, exchange of collaborators on the respective journals of the two parties, etc.

These proposals were rejected by the Socialist Party which in August, 1937, put forward the demand that there should be no local unity contacts of socialists and communists as a condition for the meeting of the Unification Commission. The Communist Party accepted even this, but still no meeting took place. Then, in December, 1937, the Socialist Party decided to break off all negotiations for unity on the slender ground of an article by Dimitrov which pointed to the responsibility of German Social Democracy in the defeat of the German working class by fascism.

The Communist Party continued its campaign for unity and in May, 1938, its secretary, Thorez, published a letter on behalf of the Party stressing the need for unity if the People's Front as a mass movement was to resume its onward march and proposing a national People's Front Congress. But all overtures to the Socialist Party met with no response and in August the relations had become so strained that the Socialist secretary, Paul Faure, issued a black circular to the Socialist branches forbidding local unity of action with Communists or in local People's Front bodies, and against local or regional People's Front conferences.

This attitude reflected the differences over the Daladier policy which was to come to a head during the Munich crisis. Reaction plainly pursued the aim of driving the Communists out of the People's Front. The intense anti-working class offensive after Munich has

exposed the plans of reaction and driven the Socialists and Communists closer together. Steps towards closer unity now will provide the surest guarantee of successful action to defend the interests of the working class and of the French people as a whole.

WHERE THE RESPONSIBILITY LIES

What is the lesson to be drawn from the above analysis of the history of the People's Front? The main conclusion that stands out is that the union of all democratic forces in France, with working-class unity as the kernel, is the indispensable condition for warding off the attack of foreign fascism and internal reaction.

The People's Front has been the bastion of democratic liberties and has brought benefits which cannot be entirely destroyed. The tremendous efforts of reaction at home and abroad to smash this safeguard have been partially successful, but the cause of the present defeat of the People's Front is the exact opposite of what is so noisily proclaimed by the opponents of democratic unity in England. They pretend that it is Socialist unity with Communists and Radicals that has entailed defeat. On the contrary, it is the rupture of this unity which let the reaction triumph. They pretend that the lack of a Socialist programme led to a breakdown. On the contrary it was the non-enforcement of the existing programme which enabled the reaction to recover its ground. They pretend that the history of the People's Front is a warning against democratic unity for England. On the contrary, the lack of democratic unity in England has been not merely a warning, but an actual disaster for democracy in France. It is also sometimes suggested that the experience of the People's Front proves the impossibility of granting costly social reforms and simultaneously making provision for armaments, in other words, that, as in Germany, the workers must choose between butter and guns. This argument is also false. It overlooks altogether that the economic difficulties in France have been caused, not by the cost of social reforms, but by the deliberate sabotage of French capitalists.

THE FUTURE OF THE PEOPLE'S FRONT

What is the outlook for the People's Front? The immediate prospect on the present lines of development, is the completion of the transition by the replacement of the Daladier Government by a purely reactionary government with a composition based on the Centre and the Right with some radicals, and probably involving a split in the Radical Party. But this course involves serious contradictions.

The full programme of fascist reaction comprises subservience to Hitler and Mussolini, the destruction of all that the People's Front has given to the mass of the people, the abolition of all democratic liberties and especially the crushing of the working-class organisations, beginning with the suppression of the Communist Party. It will need

a very imminent menace of war or of fear of a working-class revolt to get the support of the bulk of the Radical Party for such a programme. The Radical Party is predominantly a petty-bourgeois and peasant party even if its leaders are representatives of capital. Already on December 10 three members of his party voted against Daladier and 29 abstained.

In the second place, it is precisely alliance with and subservience to foreign fascism that weakens France politically and constitutes a danger for its very existence. The reactionaries, in the person of Flandin and his like, have already shown that they are traitors to their country.

Add to this the fact that the blows of reaction are forging anew the unity of the Left. The People's Front in France, like that in Spain, refuse to die. For it is not an electoral arrangement, it is a living alliance of the working class with the petty bourgeoisie, especially the peasantry, for the defence of democratic liberties and interests and for the defence of peace. What is being killed now are the socialist illusions of easy victory, the opportunist and pacifist illusions of conciliating reaction and appeasing fascism.

Only the People's Front can solve the contradictions mentioned above. The militant French working-class is not only the defender of democracy and economic prosperity in France, but also the only true champion of the real national interests of France. Therefore there is the possibility of a big forward movement of the united working class, sweeping away Daladier and beating back reaction and fascism. If a similar movement arises to sweep away the Chamberlain Government in England, the victory of a new strengthened People's Front is assured.

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Indian Workers' Great One-Day Strike

BY BEN BRADLEY

THE MOST IMPORTANT event in India of recent times was the tremendous one-day strike against the Bombay Trades Dispute Bill. In Bombay alone, no less than two hundred thousand workers of all trades came out on the streets in strike action, in order to demonstrate their emphatic opposition to a measure which is calculated to severely curtail their liberty of action.

The original text of the Bill as brought forward by the Bombay Congress Ministry early in March last, opened by stating that it was to aid in the "prevention of strikes and lock-outs and to promote amicable settlement of Trades Disputes in factories and other industrial establishments." Even a glance at the original text of the Bill shows that its main purpose and trend was to restrict the freedom of trade union movement, and render direct action of the workers almost impossible. The main title of the Bill disclosed its purpose, to prevent strikes and lock-outs.

As soon as the original text of the Bill was made public, the Trade Union leaders in India expressed their unanimous condemnation, and at a mass meeting of workers held on Kamgar Maidan, Bombay, on March 7, Subhas Chandra Bose, President of the Indian National Congress, also expressed his dissatisfaction with the measure.

It was recognised on all sides that the pressing through of such a measure could only have extremely serious repercussions in relation to the United National Front in India. The Ministries of the seven Provinces where there are Congress majorities, are bound by the pledges which outline the National Congress policy towards working-class legislation. The Election Manifesto of the Congress fully understood the democratic character of the economic struggle of the masses. It assured the workers the right to strike and organise, it promised freedom for the Trade Union Movement, and also declared that the Congress would establish conciliation machinery for settlement of industrial disputes.

The Legislative Assemblies with Congress Ministries had acquired an important significance for the working-class. The Congress Ministries are under mandate to pass measures extending democratic rights and liberties, to remove bureaucratic restrictions, thus enabling the workers and peasants to organise and struggle for better economic conditions. It is with these facts in mind that we consider the Bill which roused the opposition of the Indian working-class movement.

One of the most objectionable features of the original text runs as follows :

III. Any Union may apply to the Registrar for registration as a recognised Union. On receipt of such application for registration, the Registrar shall forward a copy of the application to the employer or employers concerned, and on receipt of a communication from such employer or employers to the effect that the Union has received recognition from them the Registrar shall proceed to register such union as a recognised Union.

This clause would mean that no union would be registered unless the said Union satisfied the employers.

We will not go into detail in connection with the original text, because when the Draft Bill was published in the Government Gazette and presented to the Bombay Provincial Legislative Assembly six months later, on July 30, it had been considerably amended. Presumably, the vigorous opposition created as a result of the publication of the original text caused the sponsors of the Bill to make these alterations.

For example, it is very significant that the opening statement was altered from "aid in the prevention of strikes, etc.," to "make provision for the promotion of peaceful and amicable settlement of industrial disputes by conciliation and arbitration and for certain other purposes." Further, the clause referred to earlier in connection with submitting an application for registration to the employers first, does not appear in the published Draft of the Bill.

Even with the drastic alterations made in the wording between the first and second drafts of the Bill, still the Bill as submitted remained most objectionable. Ignoring the protests of the Bombay Provincial Trade Union Congress, the new Draft embodied the same principles which had evoked the protests. The most vicious aspect of the Bill was that it would take away from the worker the only effective weapon he has—the right to strike.

The Trades Disputes Act (1929) of the Government of India, which evoked so much protest, prevents lightning strikes by prescribing a month's notice in public utility service. The present Bill not only demands a notice of strike, but makes every strike which takes place before the conciliatory proceedings are over illegal, but the notice provision, together with the conciliatory proceedings, would make strikes impossible for a period of between three to five months—thus strike action would be paralysed under this Bill.

The original draft blatantly announced its preference for arbitration and company Unions. The new proposals are intended to do the same with equal effectiveness. Militant unions, disfavoured by the owners, are effectively shut off from representing the workers, or entering into collective agreements before the Conciliation Court. Under Section 7 of the Bill any recognised Union with not less than five per cent. membership of the total number of employees will be declared a Registered Union under the Act. A Registered Union secures the right

of representing the workers under certain conditions in the Conciliation Court. The Bill does not lay down any provision regarding recognition. There is no obligation on the owners to recognise a genuinely representative union. The question is left to the sweet will of the owners who are notorious for their hostility to any independent union. The provision, therefore, is a direct incitement to start company unions or recognise anti-working-class ones and secure them the right of representation before the Conciliation Court.

The same section provides that where a Union is not recognised it must show 50 per cent. membership of the total employed before it is registered, *i.e.*, before it can claim to recognise the workers in a Court of Conciliation. Anyone conversant with the Trade Union Movement knows that very few Unions can boast of consistent 50 per cent. membership. This provision therefore threatens the existence of free Trade Unions.

The Bill provides for the establishment of a permanent tribunal for Arbitration—the Industrial Court—and contemplates making arbitration more and more the dominant method of settling disputes. The Conciliation proceedings are to last for a period of three to five months—no strikes can take place during this period.

The owners, however, have been allowed a number of exceptions. They can lock-out their employees in a period of industrial depression. No notice is necessary. The workers cannot take the dispute to the Conciliation Court. Notice is required only for lock-out arising out of a trade dispute. Schedule II. of the Bill allows the owners to reduce the number of employees on the plea “that the character or volume of production has changed.” Thus under the plea of temporary depression the owner can dismiss any number without notice, without conciliation proceedings. The change will become operative immediately. The workers are not allowed to give an immediate reply to this sudden change. Section 62 (b) (a) (c) makes it illegal to strike before the conciliation proceedings are over, that is, for a period of three to five months. In the meanwhile the change will continue to be in operation. This is nothing but a legal provision to break the solidarity of the workers. The Bill makes conciliatory proceedings absolutely binding on the workers but not on the owners.

This same attempt to load the workers with heavy restrictions is seen in other provisions. Owners may lock-out their factories without notice by pleading industrial depression. But workers cannot strike for the whole period of conciliation, when prices are rising. World conditions exempt owners from the operation of the Act, but not the workers.

This partiality for the owners is notoriously seen in Section 28. That Section makes it incumbent on workers to give notice of every change that is desired. But the clause binding the owners to give notice conveniently omits the question of wages. One is apt to treat this as an oversight. But the precise way in which the workers’ responsibilities

are mentioned, makes one believe that the omission is deliberate. *Anyway the Bill as it stands does not require any notice or conciliation proceedings when the owners want to reduce wages. At the same time it compels workers to resort to conciliation whenever a change is desired.* No comment is necessary on this provision which so shamelessly favours the owners. There are a number of such provisions which directly or indirectly allow the owners to make changes and simultaneously deprive the workers of the right to resist immediately.

Under Section 62, every strike, whether before or after conciliation proceedings, against the standing orders of the management, is rendered illegal for a period of one year. So far as the standing orders are concerned the right to strike is abolished for a year. So far as other matters are concerned no strike can be declared or commenced till after the conciliation proceedings are over. Workers cannot declare a strike only for the reason that the employer has not carried out provisions of any standing order and has made an illegal change. The provision here is absolute. This is followed by another provision which restricts the right still further. After conciliation proceedings a strike to be legal must be commenced within two months after the expiry of the conciliation proceedings. Thus in various ways the right to direct action is so narrowed down that the freedom to strike is given only for two months after the expiry of conciliation proceedings.

The new Bill enhances the penalties for illegal strikes. *The original draft prescribed a fine equal to one day's wage for every day of the illegal strike. The present proposals prescribe a penalty of six months' imprisonment or fine, or both.* The same penalties are prescribed for instigation. The Trade Disputes Act of the Central Government prescribes three months' imprisonment for illegal strikes. The Bombay Ministry intends to outbid the Central Government in legislative tyranny.

Strike is the only effective weapon of struggle in the last resort. In the final stage it is *the normal form of industrial unrest, the most common form of workers' resistance.* On the other hand, the owners' counter-offensive does not normally take the form of lock-out. It takes the form of strike-breaking. Lock-out, as a method of intimidating the workers, is rarely used. In the nature of things it cannot be used as a normal weapon of counter-offensive. *By putting strikes and lock-outs in the same category the Bill penalises the only weapon of the workers.*

The Bombay Provincial Trade Union Congress made every effort to meet the Congress Ministers in order to discuss their objections to the Bill and to endeavour to get them to retrace their steps. The Bill was opposed in the Legislative Assembly by representatives of the Trade Union Movement, but the Congress Government persisted in pressing through this measure.

At huge workers' rallies all over India, workers voiced their protests against this reactionary Bill.

On October 16 the Bombay workers, under the leadership of the

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Bombay Provincial Trade Union Congress, decided to organise a one-day Protest Strike to demonstrate against this unwanted Bill, and to demand its withdrawal. The Congress Socialist Party opposed this plan of the B.P.T.U.C. to rally the workers against this measure and in defence of their trade union rights.

As November 7 drew near the Maharashtra Provincial Congress Committee mobilised all its resources in an endeavour to counter the call of the B.P.T.U.C. for the one-day Protest Strike. Motor lorries fitted with loud speakers went around the working-class areas calling upon the workers not to strike; meetings were arranged for front-rank Congress leaders, but the poor attendances at these meetings showed, as the *Bombay Sentinel*, a Nationalist evening daily, stated on November 2, that even all this "has not cut much ice among the mill workers. The strike will come off as planned by the Labour leaders and the demonstration promises to be a very imposing one."

A last-minute effort was made by Labour leaders to prevail upon the Congress Ministry to postpone the further consideration of the Bill and discuss its provisions at a Joint Conference with Labour representatives. This was rejected.

November 7, 1938, came, and it will go down in the history of the Indian working-class movement as one of the greatest demonstrations of the working-class in defence of trade union rights. *No less than 200,000 workers of all trades came out on the streets of Bombay alone.* Only 6 out of a total of 69 textile mills of Bombay worked partially during the day shift. In not one Mill did the night shift workers turn up. The Municipal Workshops closed down. The scavengers joined the protest strike. At Kurla, a suburb of Bombay, 3,000 workers downed tools. Five thousand tannery workers of Dharavi joined up. The overwhelming majority of the building workers, 5,000 domestic servants, compositors and machine-men of many presses in Girgaum, including those employed at the press of Patil (the Secretary of the Bombay Congress Committee), all the gold, silver and brass workers in Bhulshwar and Mandvi participated in the strike.

"For the first time in the history of this great industrial city which has backed the Congress to its utmost power and strength in all its trials and vicissitudes, the word of the Congress failed in a most dismal manner." (*Bombay Sentinel*, November 7, 1938).

Never had Bombay seen such a complete and spontaneous strike. Never had the unity of the working-class been demonstrated in such a striking manner. It was the most important mass demonstration of workers since the great strike movements of 1928-29.

The rally at the Kamgar Maidan was attended by over one hundred thousand strikers. This vast gathering passed the resolution condemning the Labour Bill without a single dissentient voice.

It was not in Bombay alone that the proletariat struck. At Ahmedabad, the fortress of Mr. Gulzarilal Nanda, 10,000 workers of 12 mills came

out on strike. This in spite of the utmost efforts made by the Majoor Mahajan (Ahmedabad Labour Association), in spite of the orders issued by the police practically prohibiting processions.

At Sholapur, the Juni Mill workers were the first to down tools. The workers came out *en bloc* and formed a procession of 8,000 led by Meenakshi Sardesai. This was the signal for the workers of other mills. By noon, 80 per cent. of the workers were out on the streets. All the women workers in Bidi factories joined the strike.

At Amalner, Dhulia and Chalisgaon, the strike was a complete success. Scores of presses had to close down at Poona.

The working-class, as far away as Calcutta, Cawnpore and Madras also demonstrated their solidarity and support to the magnificent stand the Bombay workers were making.

In Bombay City early in the morning of November 7, lorry loads of armed police invaded the working-class locality. Trade Union leaders toured the locality in a lorry with a loud speaker calling the workers to strike action. Despite all Congress efforts to frustrate the strike, it was a tremendous success. An eye witness, writing in *National Front*, describes a scene as follows :

Deafening noise was coming through the window. I looked out of the window and found tram-cars packed with working class youth and children. They had hoisted up the red flag on the cars or waved them through the windows, lustily singing revolutionary songs and shouting slogans of triumph. We had only one lorry to do propaganda for the strike, but the boys managed to celebrate the victory from every tramcar or bus that passed through Parel. Not one passenger was hurt or molested. Tram conductors let them in without hindrance. The broad grin of the police constables showed that the thrill of a most successful struggle had seized them too.

I went round among the knots of elderly workers. The ho'iday mood of the morning was no more there. They looked grim and thoughtful. Uppermost in their mind was "A Black Bill . . . the same lathis . . . Bullets too . . . all this under a Congress Ministry . . . what to make of the Congress now. . . ."

The police had opened fire on three occasions and there had been lathi charges. A number of workers were shot, two workers died as a result of the shooting—Bhairoo Chavan and Bhagaji Waghmare add their names to the long list of workers who have made the greatest sacrifice in defence of working-class rights.

Interested elements who were desirous of splitting the united front of the Indian people tried to utilise the strike to drive a wedge between the working-class and the Indian National Congress. *The Times of India*, the mouthpiece of the British Government, stated on the eve of the strike : " It is a trial of strength between the Congress and the labour leaders." This, however, was far from being the case, the working-class of Bombay have a long record of struggle under the leadership of the Indian National Congress, the strike was not under the leadership of anti-Congress elements.

In order to show that workers understood what they were struggling for, we will quote the most influential working-class paper in Bombay, *National Front*:

The smashing victory of the strike is not a victory against the Congress. It is a victory for working class unity, a victory of the same principles fighting for which the Congress has grown, and therefore a victory for the Congress in the truest sense of the word. The fact that Dr. Ambedkar supported the strike, the fact that Sjt. Jamnadas Mehta is the President of the B.P.T.U.C. cannot detract from the essential character of the protest strike. It was a victory over those who in the interest of enemies of the people seek to divide the popular forces, who disrupt the unity of the Congress by their attacks on the working class.

The 7th November strike was the greatest independent political action by the proletariat of this country. It shall prepare the proletariat for future actions on an even vaster scale. The unity of the working class movement achieved at Nagpur will be further cemented and strengthened by this first great united action under the leadership of the united T.U.C. for the defence of democratic rights of organisation and action.

The strike is of national significance. The workers downed tools in protest against a measure initiated by the Congress Ministry.

The blood of workers flowed on the streets of Bombay on November 7th because the Congress Ministry remained deaf to all appeals, refused to listen to the demand made by the A.I.T.U.C. representing over three hundred thousand organised workers.

The strike must act as the unifier of the national forces. The suicidal ministerial policy of concessions to vested interests and upholding police firing in the name of non-violence must be reversed. Adherence to Truth demands admission of the overwhelming success of the strike. The Black Bill whose condemnation the working class has written with its blood must be withdrawn. The unity of the people which has been achieved under the banner of the Congress must not be allowed to be disrupted.

Dr. Suresh Banerji, President of the A.I.T.U.C., has, according to latest information, been discussing the proposal for a Conference between the Bombay Provincial Trade Union Congress and the Congress Ministries, with Jawaharlal Nehru and other leaders of the Congress. The workers are concerned with the unity of the nation as a whole; they seek to rehabilitate the cordial relations that must exist between the Indian National Congress and the Trade Union Congress if India's battle for freedom is to succeed.

Jawaharlal Nehru can play an important rôle in connection with this situation. While in England he was conscious of the growing rift between the Ministerial conciliators on the one hand and the growing force of the labour and kisan struggle on the other. He indicated this in an article he wrote in the *LABOUR MONTHLY* in August last year. All left Congressmen, labour and kisan workers, Socialists and Communists, will look to Jawaharlal Nehru to give a lead to stop the drift towards compromise. The most effective way to do this and to save unity would be first to consolidate all these forces in the form of a determined bloc as the basis for achieving the broader unity of the Indian people for the struggle against the Federation.

The Arab Jewish Conference

BY I. RENNAP

THE WOODHEAD COMMISSION Report, which proved the impossibility of partitioning Palestine, has ended a brief phase in British policy in Palestine. This phase was a strategic manoeuvre, attempting to abandon the Mandate as an instrument of rule and to substitute for it a new device with which to rule Palestine. This device was partition.

The Arab revolt, which to-day has reached such an unprecedented high level, has been a great blow to British prestige in the Near East. The National Government realised that the Mandate, as previously administered, was no longer a suitable instrument of policy. So the Mandate, whose workability had never before been questioned, was "discovered" by the Peel Commission to be unworkable; and the promises made to Arabs and Jews, which hitherto had been declared compatible, were "discovered" to be incompatible. Partition was put forward as the one and only solution.

Under Partition, the most vitally strategic parts of Palestine would still be retained under temporary and permanent Mandate (Haifa and Acre in the North, Akaba in the South). The centre of Palestine, which is of lesser strategic importance to Britain, would be carved up into Jewish and Arab puppet States. Britain's hold would still be clamped firmly on Palestine, whilst a measure of the responsibility for mandatory rule would be relinquished; and at the same time a semblance of "independence" would be granted to Arabs and Jews.

Partition became Britain's official policy in Palestine since the Peel Report. It was met with ever increasing resistance by the Arabs, whilst large numbers of Jews, Zionist and non-Zionist, also opposed it.

The Woodhead Report, in which three different Partition schemes were examined, proved with a wealth of facts and figures that Partition was impossible. "We have said that in our opinion there is a deep-seated hostility to partition in any form among the Arab population of Palestine, and that we are convinced that the plan recommended by the Royal Commission would lead to an outbreak of general rebellion which could only be put down by stern and perhaps prolonged military measures." (p. 233.)

The British Government therefore has been compelled to abandon Partition as "impracticable."

What will Britain's future policy be? An indication of this has already been given. This is the Conference of Jewish and Arab leaders which the National Government intends calling shortly. In its statement of

policy it declared that the Jewish representatives who will be invited will be from the Jewish Agency and the Arab representatives who will be invited will be those Arabs from Palestine and the neighbouring Arab States who are "moderate" in their opinion. The Grand Mufti, or his followers, will be excluded since they are all alleged to be "responsible" for the "organisation" of "terror" and "violence."

It is impossible to understand this new turn in British policy without a basic understanding of these elements from both sides which Britain desires to call together in conference ostensibly for the purpose of effecting a rapprochement.

Who are the "moderate" Arabs? They are those Arab Nationalists who oppose the full-blooded anti-Imperialist and full national independence policy of the now suppressed Arab Higher Committee led by the Grand Mufti, and are prepared to compromise with British rule and the Zionists.

They are, in the main, organised in the National Defence Party which is led by Ragheb Bey Nashashibi. Many people think that the *basic* division between the Nashashibi faction and the Grand Mufti's faction is one of traditional family rivalry. This is not the case. These two trends in Arab nationalist policy reflect, in general, the transformation of the Arab economy under the impact of Zionist penetration, and in particular reflect the interests of social groupings within the Arab bourgeois and landowning class and their relation to British Imperialism. To reduce the Nashashibi opposition to the Grand Mufti to mere family rivalry is to obscure the whole issue. Both "moderate" and "extreme" Arab nationalism have, as we will show, a definite social basis.

Zionist penetration has had repercussions on every strata of the Arab population. Jewish land purchases from Arab landlords have contributed in a measure towards the landlessness which exists among large sections of the Arab peasantry. These newly created Arab proletarians, unorganised, badly paid and without any State aid and protection are confronted with the chauvinistic policy of the Histadrut (Palestine Federation of Labour) which stands for "cleansing" all Jewish enterprises of Arab workers who are compelled to seek work in these concerns if they are to exist. The Arab shopkeeper and "white collar" elements have also been adversely affected by the competition of Jewish immigrants. Hence these strata are the most important driving forces behind the Arab movement.

But the impact of outside capital, Jewish and non-Jewish, has also had its effects upon sections of the Arab landlords and bourgeoisie. Many of the old native industries and crafts have been ruined by the better equipped Jewish capital. For example, the old established soap industry in Nablus has been ruined through Jewish competition (and also through import duties imposed by the Egyptian Government on imported soap). Not only have Arab capitalists, craftsmen and workers been affected, but also large numbers of peasants who cultivated the

olive trees which supplied the industry with oil. Thus this section of the Arab bourgeoisie tends also, with the workers and peasants, to be driven into the anti-Imperialist struggle since it realises that its salvation lies in an independent Palestine having the power to build its own tariff walls, and to prevent native capital from being crushed by better equipped alien capital. Further, the impoverishment and the subsequent radicalisation of the peasantry tends to drive many of the traditional landowning families, if they are to retain their leadership of the Arab masses and to divert discontent away from themselves, into the anti-Imperialist struggle. Thus this section of the Arab landowning class tends also to be associated with the National bloc, *i.e.*, the extreme anti-Imperialist parties in which the leading party is the Palestine Arab Party led by the Grand Mufti, head of the Husseini family and one of the leading Arab families in Palestine.

This is the social basis of the extreme anti-Imperialist Arabs represented in the Arab Higher Committee, who uncompromisingly demand national independence. These are the nationalists whom Whitehall calls "organisers of terror" and of "violence" (Imperialism's favourite names for genuine national revolutionary leaders), whom the National Government in its White Paper refused to invite to the conference. But this policy has been strongly criticised, even from pro-Zionist quarters who have declared that the Grand Mufti and the Arab Higher Committee are the leaders of the Arabs (Brailsford in *Reynolds*, November 13, 1938; *News-Chronicle*—"Invite the Mufti," November 16, 1938). As a result of this the Colonial Secretary has been compelled to state that certain Arabs, former members of the Arab Higher Committee who have been deported to the Seychelles, would be released so that they may be "available for selection" to the conference. But he has made clear that the Grand Mufti would not be invited.

But there is also a section of the Arab upper strata which has become wealthy as a result of Zionist immigration. These are the capitalists and landlords who have accumulated wealth through land sales to Jews at inflated prices. Many of them have become citrus growers, others farmers supplying the growing Jewish market. This section stands for "moderation" in the Arab movement, in other words, it is prepared to compromise with British Imperialism and Zionism since it owes its wealth to Zionist penetration.

It is true that on certain occasions it tends also to be nationalistic since it also comes up against the better organised and superior productive technique of the Jewish citrus growers. But it cannot be consistently anti-Imperialistic, since its interests are bound up with further Jewish immigration (the Arab farmers who sell their produce to the Jews, and the smaller landowners in this social group who want to get fat prices for their land from the Jews). Hence this group, led by Ragheb Bey Nashashibi has in the past opposed the consistent anti-Imperialist platform of the extreme Arab parties and has tended to

make national independence a secondary issue, concentrating mainly on demanding restrictions on Jewish and non-Arab capitalist enterprises. In a word, this group has stood for compromise.

It is clear, then, why the National Government desires to invite only the "moderates," *i.e.*, the compromisers and traitors within the Arab ranks who are prepared to come to terms with British Imperialism and Zionism at the expense of the Arab liberation movement.

But the tremendous upsurge of the revolutionary movement has even forced certain of these compromisers to adopt an anti-Imperialist standpoint. Ragheb Bey Nashashibi, who resigned from the Arab Higher Committee in 1936, thus breaking the unity of the Arab parties, was compelled to submit a memorandum before the Woodhead Commission, opposing Partition and putting forward practically the maximum Arab demands. In spite of this he is not trusted by the militant Arabs and dare not show his face openly in Palestine (he was secretly in favour of Partition and is now a fugitive in Egypt).

His mantle, however, has fallen upon his cousin, Fakhri Bey Hashashibi, who is now the official spokesman of "moderation." He is loud in his denunciation of the Grand Mufti and his policy. In a statement to the Press, he declared.

I accuse Hajamin el Husseini, the former Grand Mufti of Jerusalem, of diverting the noble Arab revolt to his own selfish ends. . . I am certain that the Grand Mufti's programme of terrorism against the moderate Arab leaders is futile, and I am certain also that sooner or later he will realise the wisdom of reasonable moderation.

He demanded in a memorandum submitted to the High Commissioner that the Grand Mufti be excluded from the Conference, and that the "moderates" be given every opportunity to express their viewpoint. Ragheb Bey Nashashibi has, however, officially dissociated himself from Fakhri's statements. But this, as his past policy and actions clearly show, is probably a move to "save his face."

Fakhri is looked upon with favour by Whitehall. His statements have been given wide press publicity. He is, first and last, "Britain's man." And the Zionist leaders also look upon him with favour.

Thus Britain is attempting to ally herself with the Arab "moderates," that is, the most compromising and treacherous group. The capitalist press boost them, and lyingly declares that they have the mass support of the Arab people. The National Government aimed at first to invite only these Arabs to London together with representatives of the puppet Arab kingdoms in the Near East, who will betray the Arab Independence Movement. These Arab kings can be called puppets because, in order to maintain their own positions of authority, they are forced into dependence on British support, to a greater or lesser degree.

From the Jewish side Britain intends inviting members of the Jewish agency. These will undoubtedly be the dominant Zionist leaders. This faction (the Weitzman-Ben Gurion faction) has always stood for close co-operation with the Mandatory Power and will (unless

tremendous pressure is exerted from the rank and file below) continue to do so. When British interests demanded the abandonment of the Mandate and the substitution of Partition, this faction was Britain's faithful servant. It accepted Partition, partly because it was British policy, partly because it offered them a pocket Jewish State in Palestine. These leaders forced Partition upon the Zionist movement, in spite of the opposition to Partition from large numbers of Zionist rank and filers and a number of veteran Zionist leaders, whilst leading anti-partitionists were effectively muzzled.

To-day they are bitterly disappointed that Partition has been abandoned. Their dream of a Jewish sovereign State (no matter how tiny, no matter how dangerous this would be for Palestine Jewry) has been shattered. But, true to their policy of co-operation with Britain, they have declared :

We shall, as always, co-operate (with Britain, I.R.), and in spite of disappointments and disillusionment, our co-operation will be loyal. (*Zionist Review*, November 10, 1938.)

In this way the pro-Imperialist Zionists will be brought together in conference with the pro-Imperialist Arabs. Britain will then find "a common platform" for both sides !

This "common platform" may be the continuation of the Mandate, for, say, another ten years, but in a "modified" form. Hence the Government's pious statement in its White Paper that it "will keep constantly in mind the international character of the Mandate," thus trying to reassure the Zionist and pro-Zionist elements in the Labour and Progressive movement who sincerely believe in the mandates system. To the Arabs a "gesture" has also been made. Article IV. of the present Mandate, which gives only the Jewish Agency the right to be consulted on all questions concerning the country, will be omitted from the new Mandate. The Arab, too, will be "consulted !" Some form of restricted legislative council may be offered. Immigration will be continued, still on a restricted basis.

Fakhri and his followers, if invited to the Conference, will accept even in the teeth of the opposition of anti-Imperialist Arab delegates whom Britain, at the last moment, may be compelled to invite. The Zionist leaders, in spite of protestations against the neighbouring Arab States being invited, and against the limited Jewish immigration, will also accept under pressure from the British Government.

But this betrayal of the national aspirations of the Arab people will be repudiated by the militant anti-imperialist Arabs. And Britain, after declaring piously that she has discharged her obligations to both Arabs and Jews, will declare also that the Arab "moderates" have the backing of the Arab masses, and will then deal with the "recalcitrant" Arabs.

Should such a "settlement" be offered by the National Government, it must be exposed by the Labour and Progressive movements. Like the Munich "settlement," it will not bring peace and co-operation

to Palestine, but further conflict and an increase in Fascist influence among certain reactionary elements within the Arab movement.

The Labour and Progressive movements must demand a conference of Jews and Arabs *on democratic and representative lines*. This must be the first step towards independent and democratic government in the interests of the Palestinian people. The Arab delegates must be democratically elected. They must be the real leaders and representatives of the Arab people. These leaders are, in the main, members of the Arab Higher Committee who must be amnestied and allowed to return to Palestine. The Grand Mufti, as well as other Arab leaders, who have the backing of the Arab people, must represent the Arabs, and not the Nashashibi traitors, who are hated and despised by the masses of the labouring Arab population.

From the Jewish side, democratically elected non-Zionist Jews (and in particular, Jewish labour representatives), as well as Zionists must represent the Jews ; and among the Zionist representatives there should also be such progressive Zionists, like Dr. Judah Magnes and Professor Norman Bentwich, who have worked untiringly for an Arab-Jewish understanding.

Along these broad representative lines must the progressive movements demand that the Arab-Jewish conference should take place. The basis for discussion must be the setting up of a democratic independent Government of Arabs and Jews which will settle the outstanding problems, economic and political, which confront the two peoples. Only a Palestine, independent and democratic, will bring peace and co-operation to Arabs and Jews. Only within democratic institutions can all that is best in the heroic work of the Jewish settlers be conserved and strengthened as a force for progress and of benefit to the Arabs in the Arabian lands in the Near East, as well as the Jews.

Under such conditions Palestine can also play its part, together with other countries, in relieving the terrible distress and misery among the Jews in Central and Eastern Europe. An Arab-Jewish understanding would create possibilities for further Jewish immigration into Palestine if the democratically elected Government of Arabs and Jews would find this possible within the economic absorptive capacity of the country. It would also create possibilities for the settlement of Jewish refugees in the neighbouring Arab countries within their absorptive capacity. The Arab lands in the Near East can make a great contribution towards relieving the terrible distress of the Jewish people, but this is contingent upon an Arab-Jewish understanding in Palestine on a democratic basis, and the consent of the Arab peoples as a whole.

The task of the Labour and Progressive movements as the defenders of all oppressed peoples, alike of the Jewish people who are suffering so terribly, and of the Arab people, is to demand such a real democratic conference of Jews and Arabs. This would be the first positive step towards peace and progress in Palestine.

The Itch

BY V. I. LENIN

[On the occasion of the fifteenth anniversary of the death of the greatest leader of the international working class in the period of imperialism and of the opening of the world socialist revolution, Lenin, we print in commemoration this article by him which is now for the first time translated into English and is in some respects especially appropriate to present conditions and problems. This article by Lenin appeared in the evening edition of PRAVDA on February 22, 1918, signed with the pseudonym Karpov. It was written when the young Soviet Republic was in the gravest danger. Peace negotiations with the Germans at Brest-Litovsk had been broken off and the German troops were advancing rapidly into Soviet territory.]

On behalf of the Soviet Government, Lenin was negotiating with Allied representatives for technical military assistance, including the dispatch of munitions and food, to resist the Germans. The Left Social-Revolutionaries, then participating in the Government, together with the "Left Communists" headed by Bukharin, rejected such assistance "on principle." When, within an hour or so of Lenin's article appearing, the Central Committee of the Communist Party had, by one vote, decided to accept his point of view and endorse the negotiations, Bukharin handed in his resignation from the Committee and from the editorship of PRAVDA.]

A TORMENTING DISEASE is the itch. But when people are possessed by the itch of a revolutionary phrase, the very sight of this disease causes others unbearable suffering.

Simple, clear, intelligible truths, obvious to any representative of the toiling masses, and seemingly incontrovertible, are distorted by those who have been afflicted with this kind of itch. Not infrequently this distortion has its origins in the finest, noblest, most exalted of stimuli, simply owing to failure to digest certain well-known theoretical truths, or their childishly gawky, schoolboy-servile, inept repetition (as one says, these people can't "put two and two together") but that does not make the itch any less the filthy itch.

For instance, what can be more indisputable and clear than the following truth: the government which gave the people, tortured by three years of a war of spoliation, a Soviet government, the land, workers' control and *peace* would be invincible? Peace is the most important of all. If after *conscientious* efforts to obtain a general and just peace it transpired, really transpired that it is impossible to obtain it *at the moment*, then any peasant would understand that it is necessary to conclude not a general, but a separate and unjust peace. Any peasant, even the most ignorant and illiterate, would understand that and

would *value* the government that gave him such a peace.

Bolsheviks must have fallen ill with a loathsome itch of phrases to forget that, and to provoke the peasants to thoroughly justified dissatisfaction with them when that itch led to a new war waged by Germany, the despoiler against weary Russia! Under what absurd and miserable "theoretical" trash and sophisms this itch has been hidden I have shown in my article: "On the revolutionary phrase."* I would not bother to recall it if this itch had not spread to-day (what a very contagious disease it is!) to a new spot.

To explain how this has happened I must first cite a trifling example, very simply and clearly, without "theory" (when the itch is put forward as a "theory" it is simply unbearable) without sagacious words, without anything unintelligible to the masses.

Supposing, in order to kill a tyrant and monster, Kalyaev obtains a revolver from an utter scoundrel, rogue, brigand, promising to bring him bread, money and vodka for his services?

Can Kalyaev be condemned for a "deal with a brigand" made with the object of getting hold of a lethal weapon? Any right-minded man will say no. If Kalyaev could not obtain the revolver anywhere else, and if Kalyaev's object is truly honest (the murder of a tyrant, and not murder for the sake of robbery) then Kalyaev is not to be censured for obtaining the revolver in that way, but to be applauded.

Well, but supposing a brigand, whose object is to commit a murder for the sake of robbery gets a revolver from another brigand for money, for vodka, for bread, then can *such* a "deal with a brigand" be compared (not to mention identified) with Kalyaev's transaction?

No. Anyone who hasn't lost his senses and has not caught the itch will agree that it cannot be. If any peasant saw an "intelligent man" using phrases to get away from such an obvious truth he would say: it's not for you, sir, to govern a state, but to join the ranks of the word-spinners or simply to go and steam yourself in a bath, so as to get rid of the itch.

If Kerensky, the representative of the ruling class of the bourgeoisie, i.e., of the exploiters, concludes a transaction with the Anglo-French exploiters to get arms and food from them, and at the same time conceals from the people pacts promising (in the event of success) Armenia, Galicia, and Constantinople to one Brigand, Bagdad, Syria and so on to the other, is it difficult to understand that this transaction is spoliatory, swindling, shameful on the part of Kerensky and his friends?

*This appeared in *Pravda* on February 21, 1918. It had argued on the basis of the current facts that the "left" talk of "revolutionary war" was dangerous phrase-mongering which could "ruin the revolution." Comparing the situation of Russia in 1918 with that of France in 1792-3 (a favourite "example" of the "Lefts") Lenin showed that while these people "repeat slogans, words, warlike cries, they shun the analysis of the objective facts of the day." He defined the "revolutionary phrase" as "the repetition of revolutionary slogans without the study of the objective circumstances."

No. That is not at all difficult to understand. Any peasant, even the most ignorant and illiterate, will understand that.

Well, and supposing a representative of the class of exploited and oppressed, after that class has overthrown the exploiters, has published and annulled all the secret and spoilatory pacts, and is subjected to a brigand attack on the part of the imperialists of Germany, can he be condemned for a "deal with the brigands" in the shape of the English and French, for getting arms and food in exchange for money or for timber and such like? Can such a transaction be regarded as dishonest, shameful, unclean?

No, it cannot. Any right-minded man will understand that and will laugh fit to split at those who took it into their heads "no-ob-ly" and with erudite aspect to prove that the "masses won't understand" the difference between the brigand war of the imperialist Kerensky (and his dishonest transactions with the brigands for sharing out the general stolen plunder) and the Kalyaev transaction between the Bolshevik government and the Anglo-French brigands anent the obtaining of arms and food from them to resist the German brigand.

Any right-minded man will say: to get weapons by purchasing them from a brigand for brigand ends is contemptible and filthy, but to buy weapons from a similar brigand for the purpose of a just war against a ravisher is perfectly justified. Only dainty misses and namby-pamby lads who have "read things in books" and so been finicky could see anything "unclean" in such a thing. In addition to these sort of folk, perhaps only those who have caught the itch can fall into such an "error."

Well, but will the German worker understand the difference between Kerensky's purchase of arms from the Anglo-French brigands in order to take Constantinople from the Turks, Galicia from the Austrians, Eastern Prussia from the Germans, and the Bolsheviks' purchase of weapons from the same brigands in order to resist Wilhelm, when he has sent his troops against socialist Russia, who had offered an honest and just peace to all—against Russia, who had declared the war ended?

We expect the German worker to "understand" this, first because he is an intelligent and educated worker, secondly because he is accustomed to living in culture and cleanliness, not to suffering either from the Russian itch generally, or the itch of the revolutionary phrase in particular.

Is there any difference between murder with a view to robbery and murder of a ravisher?

Is there any difference between a war between two groups of despoilers over the division of the plunder, and a just war for liberation from the despoilers' attack on a people which have overthrown its despoilers?

Does not the estimate whether I act wisely or stupidly in acquiring

weapons from a brigand depend on the aim and purpose of that weapon? On its employment in a dishonest and shameful or a just and honest war?

Pah ! What a filthy disease is the itch ! And difficult is the trade of the man whose job it is to give those suffering from the itch a good steaming in a Russian bath

P.S.—In their war of emancipation against England at the end of the XVIIIth century the Americans employed the aid of Spain and France, competitors of, and colonial brigands just as much as, England. I hear “left-wing Bolsheviks” have been found who have addressed themselves to the writing of a “learned work” on the “dirty transaction” of these Americans

PUBLICATIONS RECEIVED

I Married a German. Madeleine Kent. (Allen & Unwin.) 12s. 6d. 349 pp.

The Truth about the Peace Treaties, Vol. II. Rt. Hon. D. Lloyd George. (Victor Gollancz Ltd.) 18s. 731 pp.

Notre Lutte pour la Paix. Maurice Thorez. (Editions Sociales Internationales.) 12 frs. 200 pp.

The Geography of Capitalism. W. G. Moore. (Victor Gollancz Ltd.) 1s. 6d. 96 pp.

Poems of Freedom. Selected by John Mulgan. (Victor Gollancz Ltd.) 3s. 6d. 192 pp.

China Fights Back. Agnes Smedley. (Victor Gollancz Ltd.) 7s. 6d. 286 pp.

Deux Systèmes. E. Varga. (Editions Sociales Internationales.) 30 frs. 413 pp.

“*Peace for our Time.*” Allen Hutt, Gordon Schaffer and George Darling. (Labour Research Department.) 6d. 56 pp.

Coal Combines in Lancashire and Cheshire. W. H. Williams. (Labour Research Department.) 1d. 14 pp.

Green Banners. R. M. Fox. (Secker & Warburg.) 12s. 6d. 352 pp.

BOOK REVIEW

Wage Studies

Wage Policy in Relation to Industrial Fluctuations by A. G. Pool. London, 1938. (Macmillan and Co. Ltd. 305 pages. 12s. 6d.).

Right Wages: The Index which Determines the Wages Best for both Capital and Labour by A. Grant McGregor. London, 1938. (Sir Isaac Pitman and Sons Ltd. 316 pages. 8s. 6d.).

Salaries, Wages and Labour Relations by J. O. Hopwood. London, 1938. (Macdonald and Evans. 124 pages. 12s. 6d.).

OF THE THREE books under review two have a similar subject; Mr. Pool and Mr. Grant MacGregor deal with wages and wage policies in their relation to the general economic development.

Mr. Hopwood has an altogether different theme. He deals very efficiently with the problem of "pay-roll administration." It is a matter of interest to most big employers to know how to grade their workers' and salaried employees' income in such a way as to pay as little as possible, to give on the other hand enough incentive to work as fast and as much as possible in the hope of some kind of preferment, and yet to evaluate beside pure technical efficiency such factors as "loyalty to the firm" which can find expression, for instance, in scabbing. Mr. Hopwood, who is director of employment of the Philadelphia Electric Company, has developed a most ingenious system which will be studied by employers and which, therefore, must be studied by trade unionists also in order to enable them to take counter-measures against attempts by employers to introduce Mr. Hopwood's system. The book is written in a very scientific manner and the idea of interpreting "loyalty" as occasional scabbing is, of course, a product of the reviewer. Mr. Hopwood is quite explicit about his philosophy of wages which finds clearest expression when he discusses the question whether wages should rise with increasing cost-of-living :

Individuals are paid because of participation in productive enterprise and not because of their needs. The general level of rates of pay which can be reached depends upon the income and the efficiency of the enterprise rather than upon cost-of-living. How the individual spends his income has no bearing upon his earnings.

In the interests of labour one could wish that English employers spoke the same simple brutal language as American efficiency experts.

* * * *

Mr. Pool divides his study in two parts. The first one studies in how far wage changes can influence fluctuations affecting individual industries and fluctuations of industry as a whole, *i.e.*, cyclical crises. As to the influence of wages upon the trade cycle he comes to the conclusion

that a greater plasticity of wage rates than at present exists is not likely to make any appreciable difference, one way or the other, to the cyclical fluctuations in output and employment.

It is a pleasant surprise to find an author who is not convinced that the last crisis was due to the "rigidity of wages" and that if real wages had been cut down before 1929 the crisis could have been avoided. On the other hand, as far as depressive conditions in individual industries are concerned, Mr. Pool is of the opinion that these are due to the fact that wages in the prospering industries are too high. His argument is :

The main contention here is that the kind of rigidity of wages which is most damaging to employment arises not from the failure of wages to fall in depressed industries, but from their failure to fall in prosperous industries. Permanent shifts in the demand for labour as between different trades need to be followed by an industrial transference of labour, and this can be rendered impossible, or at least inadequate, if high wages prevent a sufficient expansion of demand in the prosperous industries.

The reader will, however, seek in vain for proof that with declining wages in the expanding industries their expansion will be accelerated to such a degree that they will absorb the unemployed in the depressed industries. This part of the book is the most unsatisfactory not only because the conclusions are wrong and dangerous to the labour movement but also because the examination of the problem is superficial. The second part of the book gives a survey of the methods applied, chiefly in Great Britain, of hitching wages to some kind of standard, either the selling price, or profits, or the cost-of-living. An all too short final chapter deals with the important problem of joining wages to an index of national production—a method of avoiding a decline in relative wages, by far the best method developed up to now. A more careful survey of the studies published by the American Federation of Labour on this subject (instead of a few quotations from secondary sources) would have enriched this part of the book very considerably, and would have made it of real use to the labour movement.

* * * *

Mr. Grant McGregor develops in his book a plan for national economy almost solely based on the regulation of wages. He forgets that there are employers who want to get as high profits as possible, he does not know that the state is an instrument in the hands of the ruling class, an instrument to help to intensify the process of exploitation and plundering of the masses of the people. He is a man of the very best intentions, humane and a most curious combination of political innocence and economic knowledge. One quotation is sufficient to show the tenor of the book :

It is suggested that the proper way to bring about prosperity in Great Britain with the maximum amount of equity to all, would be for the Government to decree an increase in wages and salaries above the present level, amounting to say, 10 per cent., then 5 per cent. from time to time until all labour and capital became comfortably employed. In each case the Government would give, say, thirty days' notice in advance of the time the rises were to be effective.

On a sunny evening, twenty years after the masses have gained power, an economic historian will glance through this book with amused pleasure. To-day the situation is too serious for us to spend our time on well-meaning utopians.

JOHN KNIGHT.

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